

Jordan Times

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21 die in Mexico air crash

LOS MOCHIS, Mexico (AP) — An Aerocalifornia airliner carrying 21 people crashed Monday at the fog-covered airport of this Pacific port, killing all those on board, an airline spokeswoman said. Mara Castellon, spokeswoman for the airline's main office in La Paz on the Baja California peninsula, said, "there were no survivors." She said it was a DC-3, two-engine propeller plane flying from Ciudad Constitucion on Baja California to Los Mochis. "It burst into flame and from the air you could see the tail section was separated and it looked like the plane was totally destroyed," Associated Press correspondent Cam Rossie, who was flying above the Los Mochis airport in a six-seater Cessna at the time of the crash at about 10:15 a.m. (GMT), reported by phone. "It (the plane) made an attempt at the landing strip, partially covered with fog."

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King receives Omani message

AMMAN (R) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received a message from Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman on current Arab, Islamic and bilateral relations. The message was delivered to the King by Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Abdulla at Al-Nadwa Palace. The audience was attended by Foreign Minister Taher Al Masi and Omani Ambassador to Jordan Khayr bin Hamad bin Seif Al Bishri. The Omani minister arrived in Amman earlier Wednesday accompanied by his Under-Secretary Hashim bin Taseer on a brief visit and was met by Mr. Masi and other senior Foreign Ministry officials.

Iran says plane is 'lost'

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian fighter jet crashed after an air raid on the "Qala Daza military base" in the area, Iran's national news agency IRNA reported. The agency quoted a war information spokesman as saying Iran held Iraq responsible for the life of the pilot. In Baghdad, an Iraqi military spokesman said an Iranian F-5 jet was shot down at 0715 GMT over Qala Daza, a northern Iraqi border town (see page 2).

U.N. patrol dismantle Katyushas

TEL AVIV (AP) — A United Nations patrol dismantled four Katyusha rockets directed at Israeli settlements on Wednesday, only minutes before they were set to explode, a U.N. source said. The patrol, which was on a routine patrol when they discovered the rockets on the beach at Ras Al Bayda, seven kilometers north of the Israeli border, said the source. He asked not to be named. It was the third time in the past week that U.N. troops have found and safely dismantled such rockets. Last week the forces found five Katyushas.

Austria jails 2 Syrian hijackers

VIENNA (AP) — Two Syrians who hijacked a West German plane to Vienna last year were convicted on Wednesday of air piracy and kidnapping and sentenced to five years in jail each. Vienna criminal court found that Ismail Belvir and Jamal Malik Khadagani, both 27, on Feb. 27, 1985, hijacked a German Lufthansa carrier on a flight from Frankfurt to Damascus, where they were being deported for various offences committed in West Germany.

British envoy appeals for Collett's release

SIDON (AP) — British Ambassador John Gray appealed on Wednesday for the release of Alec Collett, a British writer kidnapped 10 months ago by gunmen seeking release of Arab and Muslim prisoners in Britain. "Mr. Collett is an elderly man... he has worked for the Palestinians and helped them and we don't understand why he was kidnapped," said Mr. Gray. "I am seeking his release on humanitarian grounds."

No breakthrough in talks following PLO's rejection of new American offer

By Lami K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

FIVE DAYS of intensive talks between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) appeared to have achieved no breakthrough on Wednesday after the Palestinian leadership had turned down a compromise formula proposed by the U.S. to breathe new life into the stalled Middle East peace process.

A senior Palestinian official told the Jordan Times on Wednesday that the PLO had rejected an American offer for formal participation in an international conference in return for acceptance by the PLO of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

"We could not accept this offer because it falls short of American endorsement of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination," said Hani Al Hassan, political adviser to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. The offer, according to Mr. Hassan, was conveyed through Jordan.

His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Arafat held a round of talks

on Wednesday on the joint Jordanian-Palestinian effort to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem. The Jordanian news agency, Petra, said the talks dealt with the Middle East peace process and the proposed international conference.

Shortly before Wednesday's talks between the King and Mr. Arafat, Prime Minister Zaid Rifai held a one-hour meeting with the PLO chairman. Senior officials from both sides attended the talks. It was the fourth round of talks between the King and the PLO and the fifth round of formal talks between the Jordanian and Palestinian delegations. After the King concluded his talks with Mr.

Arafat, both leaders left the Prime Ministry and the delegations continued discussions.

According to Mr. Hassan, both Jordan and the PLO discussed the U.S. proposal and the PLO's position on it.

He said that the PLO had offered a counter proposal to issue a statement which would include an acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 but linking the acceptance to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination within the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

"But the Americans conveyed to us, through Jordan, their official rejection of our suggestion and stood by their offer which we cannot possibly accept," said Mr. Hassan, a member of the Central Committee of Fateh.

It was not clear whether the U.S. proposal that Mr. Hassan was referring to was the same as outlined by a senior State Department official in an interview with the Jordan Times on Wednesday. According to the State Department official, the proposal called on the PLO to agree to allow Palestinians who are not

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Experts plough through shuttle wreckage seeking clues to blast

CAPE CANAVERAL (Agencies) — Bits of the doomed U.S. space shuttle Challenger began washing up on beaches near the Kennedy Space Centre on Wednesday as the nation sought answers to Tuesday's stunning catastrophe in space.

More than a dozen planes and ships patrolled offshore, but they were searching for scientific clues rather than for survivors.

Officials said the seven astronauts, including a woman schoolteacher, probably died instantly when the spacecraft blew up 16 kilometres above the earth, 72 seconds into its planned six-day voyage.

Chances of recovering their remains in the 15,600 square kilometre search zone in the Atlantic Ocean were remote, the officials

said. "National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) authorities would give no details on what may have caused the 100-tonne, \$1.2 billion spaceplane to blow apart as it hurtled skyward at three times the speed of sound."

The shuttle programme was put on hold pending a complete investigation. It took 22 months to probe the worst previous U.S. space programme disaster, a fire during a ground test that killed three astronauts in January, 1967.

The investigation could take months, just as it did after America's only other space programme tragedy, the launch pad fire that killed three Apollo astronauts 19 years ago this week. The Soviets have lost four cosmonauts in

flight. Tuesday's explosion is expected to halt space shuttle flights for many months. Jesse Moore, director of NASA's shuttle programme, said a shuttle will not fly again until the cause of the accident is pinpointed and corrections made.

NASA had planned a record 15 shuttle flights this year, and the Challenger was on the second.

Killed along with New Hampshire schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe and Japanese-American Ellison Onizuka, commander Francis R. Scobee, pilot Michael J. Smith, Judith A. Resnik, Ronald E. McNair and

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Shuttle disaster draws words of sympathy and support, page 8

Peres visits W. Berlin amid tight security

WEST BERLIN (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres visited West Berlin on Wednesday amid some of the city's tightest security in recent years.

A Berlin police source, speaking to the Associated Press on the condition that he not be identified by name, said that a threat against Peres' life had been levelled by a news agency Tuesday night. However, official spokesmen refused to confirm or deny that report.

Berlin police said that 4,000 officers had been assigned to protect Peres.

There were tanks at the airport and on the motorcade route, as police in full riot gear stood ready throughout the city. The Jewish community centre, which he visited, was ringed like a fortress.

West Berlin's Jewish community is the largest in Germany with 6,300 members.

Late Tuesday, about 550 demonstrators marched from Witznbergplatz to Adenauerplatz in West Berlin to protest Israeli policy towards Palestinians.

Police said most of the demonstrators were "leftists" from the city's Alternative List party and Palestinians in West Berlin.

The Berlin trip came on the last day of Peres' four-day visit to West Germany.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Peres travelled to the Reichstag, the former parliament building for a round-table discussion with students from the Freie von Stein school.

White House rejects reported Libyan offer

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House on Wednesday brushed off Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's purported offer to urge an end to extremist acts in Europe if the United States promises not to attack his country.

"This seems to be another of Colonel Qadhafi's public relations ploys," said White House spokesman Larry Speakes when reporters asked for U.S. reaction to the proposal.

Speakes said Col. Qadhafi was becoming "his own smoking gun" by publicly acknowledging "his role in terrorist acts."

"We're interested in deeds, not words," he said.

The White House official added that the United States will continue to carefully monitor Col. Qadhafi's actions.

The United States has accused Libya of aiding and abetting the gunmen who carried out airport attacks in Rome and Vienna last month in which 20 people were killed.

Col. Qadhafi's peace offer was reported on Tuesday by Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi.

Speaking at a Rome news conference, Mr. Craxi said the Libyan leader had offered to appeal to "all Arabs" to desist from extremist acts in Europe in exchange for a guarantee that Libya would not be attacked by the United States.

Two U.S. naval carrier task forces are currently engaged in manoeuvres in the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast.

Mr. Craxi said Col. Qadhafi's conciliatory proposal had come to him in a letter from Maltese Prime Minister Carmelo Bonnici, who said he had recently been in contact with the Libyan leader.

Kuwait pledges support

AP adds from Kuwait: Kuwait announced Wednesday its support for Libya against alleged U.S. threats in the Mediterranean. It was reported here.

The Kuwaiti stance was conveyed to Libyan envoy Khalid Al Humaidi, member of the Revolutionary Command Council, during a meeting with the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, with Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah attending.

"Sheikh Jaber reiterated Kuwait's rejection of any foreign threats or interventions in any parts of the Arab World," a Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Kuwait News Agency.

Sheikh Jaber, it said, also stressed that Arab solidarity "is an effective factor in deterring any foreign intervention in Arab affairs."

The spokesman said without elaborating that during the meeting Sheikh Jaber and Mr. Humaidi "examined the implications of the freezing of Libyan assets in the United States."

Mr. Humaidi, who arrived from Abu Dhabi, told reporters after a meeting with Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah, that the talks with the Kuwaiti leader were "positive and fruitful."

"We feel there is an undivided support for Libya both on official and popular levels" in Kuwait, he said. "Such a firm stance makes us stronger and more determined to challenge the imperialist arrogance and U.S. terrorism."

Mr. Humaidi warned that war with the United States could break out at any moment as a result of "American provocations."



His Majesty King Hussein greets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Prime Ministry on Wednesday (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Israeli warplanes attack two Palestinian camps in S. Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli aircraft on Wednesday bombed what Israeli spokesmen claimed were Palestinian bases in South Lebanon for the first time in four years.

"They are criminals, but we will have the last word," said a 22-year-old Palestinian student atop the rubble of a house levelled in the Israeli raid near the southern port of Sidon.

Security sources quoted by Reuters said one person was killed and four wounded in the attacks on the Mieh Mieh and Ain Al Hilweh camps, the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon with at least 30,000 residents.

Witnesses told Reuters four jets swooped in over the sea at dawn and in seven minutes dropped bombs each estimated at 1,000 pounds of TNT, flattening two buildings and damaging a third.

Other jets flew over the explosions set off a hailstorm of shattering masonry and sent clouds of debris mushrooming over nearby banana and lemon groves. Loud

booms resounded over coastal hills up to 12 kilometres away, the witnesses said.

Wednesday's strike was Israel's first air raid on Lebanese targets this year.

The raid came three days after a Jerusalem pizza parlour was bombed on Sunday. That attack was claimed by "Fateh-Uprising," a breakaway faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Fateh group.

The raid came two days after Major General Ori Orr, Israel's northern commander, told Israel Television that Palestinian commanders were reestablishing bases near Ain Al Hilweh in Sidon.

Israel Radio said the raid was authorised by the inner security cabinet Tuesday night. The inner cabinet of Israel's top government ministers was headed at that meeting by Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir of the right-wing Likud bloc, because Prime Minister Shimon Peres of the Labour Party was on a European tour.

It was the first Israeli air raid

into Lebanon since Syria deployed long-range SA-2 anti-aircraft missiles along its border with Lebanon in November. Israeli army radio said the location of the attack was outside the range of the Syrian missiles.

Israeli military sources claimed the planes bombed three buildings; a two-storey structure belonging to the Abu Musa faction of Fateh, a two-storey building occupied by the Palestinian Liberation Front and a one-storey building of Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Israel Radio quoted Peres in West Berlin as praising the attack.

Israel Radio said the specific targets of the attack were areas around the townships of Magdoush and Darb Al Sim on the fringes of Ain Al Hilweh.

Except for one wounded Lebanese, the casualties were all Palestinians from the Ain Al Hilweh camp, the biggest in Lebanon with a U.N. registered population of 26,200.

U.S. official outlines new offer to PLO

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The U.S. administration has made a proposal under which the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is asked to agree to allow Palestinians who are not members of the organisation to take part in initial talks in preparation for the convening of an international conference, a U.S. State Department official in Washington said Wednesday.

The proposal suggests that the United States would freeze its demand that the PLO accept United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 until after a joint delegation comprising Jordan and non-PLO Palestinians have negotiated with the United States and Israel the conditions and mechanism for convening the proposed conference. "Then the PLO would be invited to accept the U.N. resolutions in return for a seat at the conference," the official, contacted by phone from Amman, said.

The proposal, according to the official, was conveyed last week to His Majesty King Hussein in London and to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in The Hague.

"If (PLO Chairman Yasser) Arafat can be persuaded to wait until the next stage in peace talks, we may be able to get the conference underway," the official said. "The only way we could probably move things is by having the PLO refrain from opposing the initial efforts until the ball starts rolling," he added.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, warned that "if they (the PLO) want to take part, they should not halt the process."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy said in a congressional testimony Tuesday that "incremental progress" has been achieved during his talks in Europe and that "a new level of detail" had been reached in the search

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Amal-Palestinian battles reerupt in Beirut camps

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Palestinian defenders of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and militiamen of the Shi'ite Amal movement fought with rocket propelled grenades and machine guns for the second day on Wednesday.

Amal fighters reinforced around Sabra and Shatila a two-hour clash there on Tuesday. Wednesday's violence sent dozens of frightened Palestinian civilians streaming from the camps.

Small-scale fighting has flared frequently around Sabra, Shatila and Bourj Al Barajneh camps since some 630 people were killed in a bitter five-week war between Amal men and Palestinians last summer.

Palestinian sources said Tuesday's fighting began when members of a security committee of Palestinians, Amal and a Syrian military observer toured Sabra and Shatila trying to persuade Amal militiamen to remove two checkpoints.

"Undisciplined Amal elements began shooting and the situation rapidly heated up," one Palestinian source said, adding the fighting had nothing to do with Amal's leadership.

Amal militiamen have maintained the checkpoints despite a Syrian-brokered peace agreement after the summer "camps war" which handed peacekeeping to a joint police and army force.

Sniper fire cracked out as families of Palestinians laden with their belongings tramped out of the refugee camps for the safety of city mosques.

Gemayel under growing pressure to quit office

BEIRUT (R) — President Amin Gemayel faced a growing chorus of demands on Wednesday for him to resign or stop blocking a Syrian-brokered peace pact for Lebanon.

"The battle will be very cruel... we are facing a faction that will use all its resources to destroy us," said Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) leader Walid Junblatt, who warned of a bitter struggle to topple the 43-year-old Maronite Christian president.

Mr. Junblatt, who signed the peace pact with Shi'ite leader Nabih Berri and now-ousted Christian militia chief Elie Hobeika, was speaking to villagers in his Shouf mountain fief.

Mr. Hobeika told reporters in the town of Zahle in Syrian-controlled east Lebanon: "I declare total solidarity with (former) President Suleiman Franjeh in... demanding the immediate resignation of the president of the republic."

Mr. Franjeh, a Maronite and a close Syrian ally, warned Mr. Gemayel on Tuesday to step down or face the consequences. "There is no solution for the Lebanese crisis unless there is a non-partisan president as head of state," he said.

Mr. Gemayel has refused to approve the peace accord, which seeks to end nearly 11 years of civil war in Lebanon by trimming the powers of the Christian-held presidency and giving the Muslim majority a bigger say in government.

Syria also expects Damascus-orthodox, Greek Catholic and Syrian Catholic churches — which have a total of some 400,000 adherents in Lebanon — also to favour his departure, they add.

Mr. Hobeika was forced into exile after battles two weeks ago by fighters of Mr. Gemayel's Falangist Party and rebels inside his own "Lebanese Forces" militia.

Guerrilla kills 2 Israeli soldiers in W. Bank ambush

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Agencies) — A guerrilla ambushed an Israeli patrol on Wednesday and shot dead two Israeli soldiers before he was killed, the Israeli army said.

Two other Israeli soldiers were wounded in the gunbattle near the Jewish settlement of Mehola in the northeastern corner of the occupied West Bank, the army said.

The guerrilla, who the Israeli army claimed might have infiltrated from the area of the ceasefire line with Jordan, attacked the Israeli patrol at daybreak, the

AP said. The foot patrol, which was followed by a machinegun-mounted jeep, was climbing down a steep dirt road into a narrow gully at the time of the ambush. The sources told the AP.

Four of the soldiers were hit before an Israeli squad shot the guerrilla from behind, said the source quoted by the AP.

The assailant was carrying Jordanian papers, the AP sources said, but they said they were not sure the papers were his and declined to identify him further, AP said.

Aden leaders claim control of Mohammad's last base

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — South Yemen's new leaders said on Wednesday they had gained control of ousted President Ali Nasser Mohammad's last stronghold in Abayan province and wiped out remaining forces loyal to him.

Aden Radio quoted a statement by the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) political bureau as saying the army's 14th brigade, based in Abayan, had "wiped out remaining pockets armed by Mohammad."

"This heroic act has destroyed his remaining forces and has restored stability throughout Abayan," it added.

In North Yemen, diplomats told Reuters columns of tanks had been seen moving from Aden towards Abayan, the ex-president's home province. They earlier said Mr. Mohammad was massing loyal troops and tribesmen there for a drive to regain the capital.

The statement made no mention of any fighting in Abayan, which lies some 160 kilometres east of Aden.

A radio station controlled by Mr. Mohammad's supporters, monitored in the North Yemeni capital Sana'a said Tuesday night three aircraft had bombed the provincial capital Zinjibar, and

two of them were shot down. A London-based Arabic magazine said Wednesday Mr. Mohammad had vowed to Aden to try to oust his opponents.

"I will return to Aden and fight until I win or die... the victory will be for the party and the revolution," the weekly Al Majalla quoted him as saying.

In what it said were remarks last week to "well-placed sources," he added: "Then I won't mind if I remain president. Power is not my concern."

His present whereabouts are unknown. The new regime says he fled Aden early in the power struggle which erupted on Jan. 13. But the Sharjah daily Al Khaleej quoted residents of Sana'a as saying he had been seen in the North Yemeni border town of Al Bayda.

The YSP on Friday stripped Mr. Mohammad of all titles and named Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakar Al Atlas as interim head of state. Mr. Atlas, who was in New Delhi when the fighting erupted, flew back to Aden from Moscow last Saturday.

Al Majalla quoted Mr. Mohammad as saying his son had been killed in an attempt by the coup

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Iraq downs Iranian jet

NICOSIA, Cyprus (Agencies) — An Iranian warplane was shot down by Iraqi air defences Wednesday when it attempted to raid the town of Qala Dize in north east Iraq, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported.

The news agency quoted an unidentified military source as saying the Iranian U.S.-made F-5 was shot down at 1005 local time (0705 GMT).

Iraq and Iran, at war since 1980, have been accusing each other of escalating air raids against each other's border towns and villages in the past week that have resulted in scores of civilian casualties.

Each side insists however its own raids are only directed against military targets.

The conflicting reports cannot be verified independently as neither side allows foreign correspondents to visit the war zones.

Iraq announced its warplanes carried out a total of 177 combat missions on Tuesday against Iranian troop concentrations in the southern sector of the 1,800 kilometre long border frontier.

Iraq has been massing troops in the southern sector of the border for several weeks in preparation for a new offensive. This is expected to develop on or about Feb. 11, the seventh anniversary of the victory of the Iranian revolution that toppled the monarchy, ushering in the Islamic regime led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

In addition to its intensified air strikes along the battlefield, Iraq has also escalated its attacks against oil tankers in the northern reaches of the Gulf, to block Iranian oil exports.

On Tuesday Iraq announced its

fifth attack on a "large naval target" (the term it uses for oil tankers) in the Gulf in as many days. Lloyd's of London confirmed that the French motor tanker "D'Aragnan", had two rickets fired at it which missed at about 1330 GMT Tuesday.

Lloyd's said the tanker was believed to be 10 miles north of Das Island at the time. The tiny island is 80 miles due east of Doha, Qatar, in the United Arab Emirates.

Lloyd's said the "D'Aragnan" was on a voyage from Singapore to the Saudi oil port of Ras Tanura, 200 miles further up the Gulf.

The attack on the vessel was the fifth in as many days since Iraq began escalating its air attacks in the Gulf last Thursday to disrupt Iran's efforts to diversify its oil export outlets. None of the previous attacks could be independently confirmed.

However, among the oil facilities confirmed to have been hit by the Iraqis was a pipeline that feeds oil from the central onshore pumping station at Gonaveh to the terminal on Kharg Island.

Iraqi oil minister Qassem Ahmad Al Uraybi said Tuesday Iran's announcement Sunday that it was reducing crude oil production by half was not due to Iran's claimed desire to stabilise oil prices, but due to damage caused to the facilities by the Iraqi bombing raids.

In a message telegraphed to the As-

sociated Press in Nicosia, Mujahideen Khalq, the main Iranian underground group opposed to the Tehran regime, said an Iranian offensive was expected "during the coming days" in the southern sector of the front.

The self-exiled group which is based in Paris said information received from its sources in Iran indicated that Iran has massed two thirds of its volunteer forces and nearly 50 per cent of the regular army for the offensive.

It added that most of the troop massing was taking place in the area between the cities of Ahwaz and Dezful in the southern Iranian oil province of Khuzestan, and particularly in the Huweizah Marshland. Last month Iraq reported its forces had recaptured the Majnoon Islands, two small sand bars believed to be rich in oil deposits, in Huweizah, which the Iranians had occupied in a major offensive in 1984.

Meanwhile Radio Tehran announced Wednesday Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Kornienko will arrive here on Sunday for a visit to Iran coinciding with celebrations of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Kornienko will lead the Soviet Union's highest political delegation to Iran since the revolution.

Iran's National News Agency IRNA said Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had sent Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi a message dealing with "international issues and the Soviet's recent three-stage plan for nuclear disarmament."

Soviet Ambassador Vil Bol-dyrev handed the message to Iranian Deputy Prime Minister Ali-reza Moayeri Tuesday, it said.

Qadhafi, Benjedid discuss long-term prospects

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian President Chadli Benjedid discussed long-term prospects for bilateral relations with Col. Muammar Qadhafi of Libya on their common frontier in the Sahara, the official news agency APS said.

It said they also discussed current international problems in several hours of talks at the field town of Amenas, 1200 kilometres south of the Mediterranean.

Murphy: Aid to Jordan, S. Arabia furthers peace

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States can help further Middle East peace by providing moderate Arab states with needed military aid, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy said after returning from talks with regional leaders.

"I would like to again emphasize that our security assistance programmes in the region remain an important part of U.S. policy," Mr. Murphy said in a prepared statement to the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East on Tuesday. "The programmes enable us to strengthen moderate states, enabling them to defend themselves, which in turn contributes to the protection of our own interests in the region."

Regarding Middle East peace negotiations, Mr. Murphy told the panel that "progress was made toward our shared goal of achieving direct negotiations between the parties," during his recent round of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the Hague and King Hussein in London.

"I will not pretend that the parties have resolved their differences," said Mr. Murphy. But he stressed that "Prime Minister Peres and King Hussein remain firmly committed to the shared objective of reaching the bargaining table. Both were encouraged by the incremental achievements made during the recent talks. Both believe we are moving in the right direction."

But Mr. Murphy noted, "There is no doubt that congressional support for the proposed Jordan arms package would have a positive influence" on the peace process.

He added that Saudi Arabia's defence needs should be met to help keep the Iran-Iraq conflict from spreading across the Gulf.

President Reagan's proposed \$1,900-million weapons sale to Jordan was tabled by Congress until March 1 unless "direct and meaningful" peace talks were under way between Jordan and Israel before then.

The administration also has plans to upgrade existing U.S.-supplied Saudi defence systems.

Following are excerpts from Mr. Murphy's statement.

"We face continuing problems in the area for which there are no easy solutions. They are not intractable, but they are certainly among the more complicated and difficult issues in American foreign policy. They affect U.S. interests in the region and the lives and well being of our friends and allies. Given the volatile nature of these problems, we must pay close

attention to them, minimising damage to our interests and those of our allies."

In recent days I have discussed at length with Prime Minister Peres and King Hussein the outstanding issues we must resolve before the opening of direct negotiations between Jordan and Israel. I am pleased to be able to report to you that during the course of those meetings in London and the Hague, progress was made toward our shared goal of achieving direct negotiations between the parties.

This sub-committee has followed closely the unfolding of our efforts over the past year. Upon returning from consultations with the parties in the Middle East on several occasions I have discussed with you the status of the peace process. Six months ago the central issues were still very much undefined. Since then, we have made steady progress to clear the underbrush and reveal the critical obstacles blocking our path.

Two months ago, our efforts began to focus on two primary issues — an international conference and Palestinian representation. But at that time, we still addressed these issues in general terms. Today I have a different message. We made clear progress during this last set of talks. The exchanges among the parties reached a new level of detail and specifics on key issues in a way we had not seen until now.

I will not pretend that the parties have resolved their differences. As this sub-committee recalls, I have long counselled against expecting a dramatic breakthrough. Finding ways to bridge differences is a small challenge; untangling the whole knot will require additional effort, ingenuity and political courage. I continue to believe, however, that this can be accomplished. Most importantly, the leaders share this opinion. Prime Minister Peres and King Hussein remain firmly committed to the shared objective of reaching the bargaining table. Both were encouraged by the incremental achievements made during the recent talks. Both believe we are moving in the right direction by addressing in a serious way specific questions about the arrangements for and participation in these negotiations, and in what we have called its international framework.

"To achieve real progress we are confronting tough questions: we are addressing seriously the compelling, difficult, but fundamental question of Palestinian representation. We have often said that the Palestinians must be represented at every stage of the process. The nature of that rep-

resentation gets to the heart of the credibility of the process and thus to the acceptability of its results by the Palestinian community. Syria too has much to gain from, and has an important role to play in achieving, a lasting peace in the region. For this reason, all parties have let it be known that Syria is welcome to participate in the process."

"Time is not always an ally of reason in the Middle East. I am concerned, and I know that King Hussein and Prime Minister Peres are as well, that further protracted delay will have the effect of reversing the momentum toward direct negotiations. We have therefore made clear to both leaders that we are prepared to intensify our efforts to assist them in achieving that objective."

Arms sales

"There is no doubt that Congressional support for the proposed Jordan arms package would have a positive influence on:

— "Our efforts to sustain peace process momentum;

— "Arab states' confidence in the U.S. as a reliable security partner; and

— "Jordan's self-defence capabilities."

"The administration proposal for Jordanian arms is, of course, still pending. Since our last open session, Congress approved legislation providing that no Letters of Agreement for advanced arms to Jordan would be valid prior to March 1 unless direct and meaningful peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan are underway. When the President signed that legislation we recognised that it was a compromise designed to avoid an adverse vote on the proposal while sensitive discussions between peace process parties were in progress. We appreciate Congressional efforts to work with us so that we might accomplish our shared objective of direct negotiations. The administration intends to abide by the conditions of the compromise. The secretary and president have made it clear that we are not going to engage in any sleight of hand."

"I am sure we all agree that the central issue is how we may best enhance the prospects for direct negotiations. The administration asks your help in avoiding a disruption at this delicate stage in the process."

I would like to again emphasise that our security assistance programmes in the region remain an important part of U.S. policy. The programmes "enable us to strengthen moderate states enabling them to defend themselves, which in turn contributes

to the protection of our own interests in the region. We have no plans to notify the Congress of major new systems for any country, although we are continuing to process requests for follow-on support, upgrades of present systems in several states, including Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia."

As I have stressed before, the administrative has an important security relationship with Saudi Arabia, the maintenance of which directly supports our interest in the free flow of oil and the stability of the Arabian Peninsula. This relationship, and the deterrence created by a strong Saudi defence, has been a major factor in keeping the Iran-Iraq war from spreading across the Gulf. Our security relationship with Saudi Arabia, the cornerstone of our bilateral relations, has enabled us to work closely with Saudi Arabia in addressing events such as the continuing strife in Lebanon and the Gulf War. We have carefully avoided viewing all Middle East issues through the prism of the peace process. We believe a strong and ongoing defence relationship with Saudi Arabia enhances prospects for regional peace and stability quite apart from the Arab/Israeli dispute.

By failing to address Saudi Arabia's legitimate defence requirements, we weaken this important relationship, detract from Saudi Arabia's ability to defend itself and reduce Saudi confidence in the value of continued cooperation with the U.S. on regional peace and security issues. At the same time, we forfeit to suppliers less mindful of the security concerns of Israel sales of military equipment worth billions of dollars and thousands of high-tech jobs.

Israeli-Egyptian relations

"A sound Israeli-Egyptian relationship is key to our regional security policy and the essential building block for broader Middle East peace. In recent months, the two sides, with our participation, have been engaged in an effort to resolve the Taba border dispute and other issues, including the absence of Egypt's Ambassador from Tel Aviv, that have eroded mutual confidence. In this context, the Israeli cabinet decided on Jan. 13 to permit resolution of Taba through arbitration — a step that could clear the way for accelerated progress. Much work remains to be done, but the outlook for improved ties between these vital peace partners is brighter than it has been for some time."

Lebanon

"We have been following the

situation in Lebanon closely and with concern as discussions over the tripartite accord continue. The U.S. remains fully committed to Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. It is our firm conviction that there is no military solution to the political problems of that troubled country. We have supported, and continue to support, a dialogue among the various factions in an effort to reach a genuine consensus on Lebanon's political future. Any solution, if it is to be viable, will require broad support in all communities."

Iran-Iraq war

"The Iran-Iraq war continues to consume the national energies and resources of both countries. It is now well into its sixth year and there are no signs that it is nearing an end. Indeed, Iran has been making intense efforts over the past several weeks to position itself for yet another major offensive against the defensive positions the Iraqis have established well within Iraq's recognised borders. Several governments and regional, Islamic and non-aligned organisations as well as the U.N. have offered to facilitate discussions with the two belligerents in an effort to end the war. Over the past three years, Iraq has been willing to engage in such discussions, in various prospective fora, while Iran has declined to participate except under conditions which are unacceptable to Iraq."

"Our policy has not changed since the last time we met. The U.S. is neutral in the conflict and we are not considering changing that policy. We have a firm policy of not supplying war-making material to either Iran or Iraq. We are in active contact with all potential mediators and have encouraged them to keep up their efforts, despite the repeated rebuffs they have experienced."

"Because Iran has stubbornly refused to agree to discuss the end of the war except on terms which are clearly unacceptable to the Iraqi side, we have chosen to exercise what limited influence we have to deny Iran additional armaments. To that end we have encouraged governments with whom we have close relations to forego the economic benefit of significant arms trade with Iran. We have had substantial, if incomplete, success in this effort."

"As far as we can tell, supporters of President Ali Nasser Muhammad continue to battle supporters of the coup and the fighting is apparently extending into the hinterland."

4 members of Islamic Jihad to stand trial in Khartoum

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — Security authorities have completed investigations involving four alleged members of the Islamic Jihad group, the state-owned newspaper Al Ayam said Wednesday.

It said results of the inquiry were passed on to the office of Attorney General Omar Abdul Attie in preparation for a trial.

Interior Minister Gen. Abbas Medani announced the four men's arrest last month, saying they had distributed leaflets threatening to assassinate government officials and political party leaders.

Gen. Medani also disclosed that Islamic Jihad threatened to blow up his headquarters unless the government met demands that he did not reveal. But in the Gulf

state of Abu Dhabi, which is part of the United Arab Emirates, the newspaper Al Itihad reported at the time that Islamic Jihad wanted the four men released, failing which both Gen. Medani's ministry and the Kuwait embassy in Khartoum would be blown up.

In its report on Wednesday, Al Ayam identified the men as Hassan Haj Ali, Yassin Mohammad Shukri, Kamal Mustafa and Mohammad Abdul Ghani Mohamamad. It did not give their nationalities.

Islamic Jihad has claimed many attacks against American, Israeli and other foreign interests in Lebanon. These included the 1983 bombings at the U.S. embassy and the headquarters of U.S. Marines and French troops in Beirut.

TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19

MAIN CHANNEL
16:00 Koran
16:30 Cartoons
16:45 Children's Programmes
17:00 News in Arabic
17:15 Paul Daniel Show
17:30 Local Contest programme
17:45 News in Arabic
18:00 Arab Songs Programme
18:15 News in Arabic
18:30 Songs Continued

FOREIGN CHANNEL
15:00 French Documentary: Petra
15:30 News in French
15:45 Bergeval et al
16:00 News in Hebrew
16:15 Emergency Room
16:30 Magazine Zero One
16:45 Return to Eden
16:55 News in Arabic
17:10 Feature Film: Change of Habit
— Elvis Presley, Mary Tyler Moore

RADIO JORDAN
855 KHz, AM & 99 MHz, FM
& partly on 95.60 KHz, SW
Tel. 773111-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Morning Show
08:00 News Summary
08:30 Morning Show
09:00 Pop Session
09:30 News Summary
10:00 Pop Session
10:30 News Summary
11:00 Concert Hour
11:30 News Summary
12:00 News Summary
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24:00 News Summary

FOR FRIDAY

JORDAN TELEVISION

MAIN CHANNEL

16:00 Koran
16:30 Religious Programme
16:45 Cartoons
17:00 News in Arabic
17:15 Paul Daniel Show
17:30 Local Contest programme
17:45 News in Arabic
18:00 Arab Songs Programme
18:15 News in Arabic
18:30 Songs Continued

RADIO JORDAN
855 KHz, AM & 99 MHz, FM
& partly on 95.60 KHz, SW

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Morning Show
08:00 News Summary
08:30 Morning Show
09:00 Pop Session
09:30 News Summary
10:00 Pop Session
10:30 News Summary
11:00 Concert Hour
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WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

EXHIBITIONS

French exhibition entitled "Naissance de l'écriture" at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 30)
An exhibition of artificial plants and flowers at the Housing Bank Complex (until Jan. 31).

CINEMA

"Adieu Bonaparte" at 8:00 p.m. Thursday at the Royal Cultural Centre.

VIDEO

"Le Musée imaginaire" at 4:00 p.m. Thursday at the Royal Cultural Centre.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre Tel. 6610267
American Centre Tel. 6443771
British Council Tel. 6412250
French Cultural Centre Tel. 6370099
Goethe Institute Tel. 6419953
Soviet Cultural Centre Tel. 6442005
Spanish Cultural Centre Tel. 6260094
Turkish Cultural Centre Tel. 6377777
Hays Arts Centre Tel. 6651995
Hansen Youth City Tel. 6671251
Y.W.C.A. Tel. 6417993
Amman Municipal Library Tel. 6361111
University of Jordan Library Tel. 8435555

MUSEUMS

Follies Museum: Jewellery and costumes over 100 years old. Also movies from Madaba and Jerash (4th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Year-round. Tel. 6517600.
Jordan Archaeological Museum: Has an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al Qal'a (Circled Hill). Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Fridays and official holidays 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.). Closed Tuesdays.
Jordan National Gallery: Contains a col-

lection of paintings, ceramics, and sculptures by contemporary Islamic artists from most of the Muslim countries and a collection of paintings by 19th Century orientalist artists. Mount Lebanon, Jabal Lubdakh. Opening hours: 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Closed Tuesdays. Tel. 6301288.
Museum of the Arab Revolt of 1916. Sports City, Amman. Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed Tuesdays. Tel. 6371569.

Service Clubs

Lions Amman Club: Meetings every first and third Wednesday at the Holiday Inn, 120 p.m.
Lodge 702: Meetings every second and fourth Wednesday at the Amman Hotel, 7:30 p.m.
Rotary Club: Meetings every Wednesday at the Holiday Inn, 1:30 p.m.
Society Club: Meetings every Tuesday at the International Hotel, 2:00 p.m.
Royal Automobile Club, Jabbal Amman. Eighth Circle. Tel. 815251, 815410

CHURCHES

St. Joseph Church (Roman Catholic): Jabal Amman, Tel. 625550.
Church of the Annunciation (Roman Catholic): Jabal Lubdakh, 637440.
St. George Church (Roman Catholic): Jabal Amman, 661757.
Church of the Ascension (Greek Orthodox): Amman, 623541.
Anglican Church (Church of the Redeemer): 1525 Amman, 678906.

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fajr
06:12 Sunrise
11:49 Dhuhur
16:05 Asr
17:07 Maghrib
18:30 Isha

BBC WORLD SERVICE
630, 720, 1413 KHz

06:00 Newswatch 6:30 Country Style
06:45 Financial News 6:55 Reflections
07:00 World News 07:30 24 Hours
07:45 The World Today 08:00 News
08:15 World News 08:45 World News
09:00 24 Hours 09:30 24 Hours
09:45 The World Today 10:00 News
10:15 World News 10:45 World News
11:00 World News 11:30 World News
11:45 World News 12:00 World News

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Alia information department at the Queen Alia International Airport, Tel. 623200, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

09:35 Kuwait (RJ)
09:45 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
09:55 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 Agaba (RJ)
09:55 Cairo (RJ)
09:55 Jeddah (RJ)
10:05 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:05 Doha, Kuwait (RJ)
10:05 Istanbul, Ankara (TK)
10:35 Muscat, Dubai, Bahrain, Larnaca (GF)

16:15 Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon (JA)
17:30 Baghdad (IA)
17:30 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Belgrade (RJ)
17:30 Athens (RJ)
18:00 Amsterdam, Istanbul (KL)
21:15 Zurich, Larnaca (RJ)
20:25 Cairo (RJ)
20:25 Baghdad (RJ)
20:25 London, Baghdad (IA)

DEPARTURES

06:30 Damascus, Frankfurt (LH)
06:30 Damascus, Athens (JA)
07:30 Agaba (RJ)
08:30 Damascus, Paris (AF)
08:30 Beirut (MEA)
11:00 Vienna, New York (RJ)
11:30 Athens (RJ)
12:00 Paris, London (RJ)
12:15 Brussels, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:15 Riyadh, Dhahran (SV)
13:30 Cairo (RJ)
15:30 Kuwait (RJ)
15:30 Ankara, Istanbul (TK)
15:30 Bahrain (GF)
16:30 Baghdad (JA)
16:30 Riyadh (RJ)
16:30 Kuwait (RJ)
16:30 Damascus (RJ)
16:30 Jeddah (RJ)
16:30 Cairo (RJ)

17:30 Swiss franc 179.1/180.5
Syrian lira 25/27
UAE Dirham 98/100
U.S. sterling pound 510.9/515
U.S. dollar 362/365.1
W. German mark 151.6/152.8

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The sky will be partly cloudy to cloudy during the day. In the Gulf of Agaba, the wind will be northerly moderate and calm sea.

Amman 4:11
Agaba 10:20
Dhahran 49.8
Jordan Valley 39.9

MONEY EXCHANGE

Wednesday rates

Level sell/buy rates in JLD

Bahraini dinar 965 974
Dutch guilder 134.1/135.2
European guilder 201/209
French franc 49.4/49.8
Iraqi dinar 339/350
Japanese yen (for 100) 186.6/188.1
Kuwaiti dinar 1266/1273
Lebanese L.L. 339/349
Omani riyal 99/101
Qatari riyal 99/101
Saudi riyal 99/101
Swiss franc 179.1/180.5
Syrian lira 25/27
UAE Dirham 98/100
U.S. sterling pound 510.9/515
U.S. dollar 362/365.1
W. German mark 151.6/152.8

11:00 British Press Review 11:15 The World Today 11:30 Financial News 11:45 Look Ahead 11:55 Press on Music 12:00 News Summary: Sing Gospel 12:15 Merchant Navy Programme 12:30 Business Matters 12:45 World News 12:55 News Summary 13:00 News Summary 13:15 The Middle East 13:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 13:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 13:55 Meridian 14:00 Radio Newswatch 14:15 Jazz for the 14:45 Sports Round-up 14:55 World News 15:00 24 Hours: News Summary 15:30 John Peel 16:00 Outlook: News Summary 16:45 Letterbox 17:00 Radio Newswatch 17:15 Les Nouveaux 17:30 World News 17:45 The World Today 17:55 World News 18:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 18:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 18:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 18:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 18:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 19:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 19:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 19:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 19:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 19:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 21:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 21:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 21:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 21:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 21:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 22:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 22:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 22:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 22:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 22:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 23:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland 23:15 A Letter from Northern Ireland 23:30 A Letter from Northern Ireland 23:45 A Letter from Northern Ireland 23:55 A Letter from Northern Ireland 24:00 A Letter from Northern Ireland

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Pilot solar energy project to start Sunday

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Khaled Al Haj Hassan will Sunday open the first pilot project using solar energy to heat water for industrial purposes. The project at the Jordan Dairy Company Limited comprises a water heating system using solar energy, pumps as well as control equipment. The system has been designed by the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) with the support of the United Nations and the West Bank government and is the first of its kind in the Arab World in terms of its size and application.

Ministry organises seminar on energy

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has organised a seminar to be held on Saturday and which will discuss rationalising the consumption of energy in the transport sector. The two-day seminar will tackle methods for the economical use of vehicles and other subjects dealing with saving energy. The seminar is in cooperation with the French energy commission and local transport services and French energy experts are expected to deliver lectures on energy-saving methods. The seminar has been organised in implementation of an earlier agreement with the French agency.

Egyptian navy ships to dock at Aqaba

AMMAN (P.T.) — Two Egyptian navy ships will visit Aqaba port on Tuesday Feb. 4 according to the Egyptian embassy in Amman. The visit is the first by Egyptian naval units to Aqaba.

Trade delegation returns from Sana'a

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Jordanian trade centre has returned to Amman at the end of a week-long visit to North Yemen where they held talks with Yemeni officials. A delegation spokesman said that the talks centred on arrangements for setting up a Jordanian industrial fair in Sana'a by the middle of March in implementation of a trade and economic agreement signed by the two countries towards the end of 1985.

Chamber discusses customs decision

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman Chamber of Industry board of directors held a meeting Wednesday under the chairmanship of Issam Eider to discuss Tuesday's government decision to exempt primary goods from customs and to increase duty on imported goods similar to those manufactured locally. A chamber spokesman said the increase in duty on some commodities will result in a rise in their retail prices.

ALTU attends transport council

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Land Transport Union (ALTU) has taken part in the meetings of the Arab transport ministers council which concluded in Tunisia this week. ALTU Secretary General Abdullah Al Dhmour said that the council discussed memoranda prepared by the Arab League general secretariat on the manufacture of some transport equipment in the Arab World as well as the activities of specialised Arab unions and organisations working in transport sector. He also pointed out that the council approved the setting up of an Arab authority for the classification and registration of ships. The participants also discussed a proposed Arab transport strategy.

Haj Hassan pays tribute to W. Bank societies

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Labour and Social Development Khaled Al Haj Hassan has paid tribute to efforts being exerted by voluntary societies in the occupied West Bank despite the difficult circumstances and hardships they encounter under Israeli rule.

The minister described the voluntary societies work as noble and characterised by a great deal of sacrifice. He also noted that the societies carry out their activities with the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of Arab people living under Israeli occupation.

The minister, who was speaking at a meeting with a visiting delegation representing these societies, said that the Jordanian government greatly appreciates the endeavours made by the pioneers of voluntary work in the West Bank. He went on to say that the prime minister and the whole cabinet are keen to develop those efforts by extending all possible help to the charitable and voluntary societies in the occupied territories.

Mr. Haj Hassan also spoke about a current programme of cooperation and coordination between voluntary societies in Jordan and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development through the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAJSWF) and the Queen Noor Foundation which is embarking on a project to unify and intensify national voluntary work. The government has allocated funds amounting to JD 15 million for the QAJSWF this year, he continued.

GUVS President Abdullah Al Khatib made a speech at the meeting outlining the work and activities of charitable and voluntary societies in the West Bank. He said that these societies extend assistance to the families of detainees and to hospitals and universities. They also run literacy centres and hold vocational training courses for handicapped persons. Dr. Khatib added, GUVS, he said, has decided to give JD 130,000 in immediate help to West Bank societies in addition to earlier allocations.

A member of the visiting delegation spoke at the meeting voicing appreciation to the Jordanian government and GUVS for their help. He also outlined the main services and activities undertaken by voluntary societies in the West Bank.



Members of a Kuwaiti delegation outline a campaign they conducted in their country to raise funds and collect donations for needy families in Jordan (Al Ra'i photo)

Kuwait donates goods, funds to needy families

By Lima Nabil
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 16-member delegation representing the students union in Kuwait has brought financial and in-kind assistance to needy families and children living in refugee camps in Jordan.

The delegation leader, Humud Al Qasba'an, told a press conference at the Regency Palace Hotel in Amman that his group brought in two trucks laden with clothes, food supplies and blankets in addition to 30,000 Kuwaiti dinars in cash to be distributed in the camps.

"This is our fourth such visit to Jordan but the contributions brought from Kuwait this time are almost double those of previous years," Mr. Qasba'an pointed out. He said that this time contributions were given by all sectors in Kuwait and the campaign was backed by the information media.

"The contributions reflect a keenness on the part of the Kuwaiti people to extend assistance to their brothers in need and to alleviate part of their sufferings which have been brought about by Israel's occupation of Palestinian land," Mr. Qasba'an added.

Mr. Qasba'an paid tribute to the Jordanian government and staff at Kuwaiti Embassy for facilitating his group's mission in Jordan. He added that the contributions represent the Kuwaiti people's sympathy and support for the Palestinian people's cause.

pathy and support for the Palestinian people's cause.

Mr. Qasba'an urged Arab countries hosting refugees and, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and other organisations to extend all possible assistance to residents of refugee camps and to provide them with basic needs and education.

Our visit to Jordan took us to refugee camps in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Jerash and Marka and also to the Islamic Hospital in Amman and we made arrangements for the distribution of the Kuwaiti contributions to the needy people in these places," Mr. Qasba'an said.

Regular donations

"We intend to convey what we have seen to Kuwait where we will try to raise more contributions to be distributed on a regular basis to needy families in the refugee camps and we will try to raise sufficient funds to finance the higher education of needy students from these camps," Mr. Qasba'an added. He went on to say that the group has printed booklets, illustrated with photographs of the refugee camps, and that these are distributed to help raise more contributions.

According to Mr. Qasba'an, his group has carried out other humanitarian work and raised contributions which they distributed in a number of African countries afflicted by drought and famine.

Sharari to tour Jordan Valley youth clubs

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Youth Hisham Al Sharari will today inspect sports clubs and youth centres in the northern Jordan Valley area. The inspection tour will take the minister to the clubs of Wadi Al Yabis, Al Mashari and Yarmouk. Mr. Sharari will hold a meeting at the district governorate of the northern Jordan Valley to discuss the clubs' activities, needs and problems.

Jordan, Iraq sign charter for joint industries company

Long-planned venture gets off the ground

By Rana Sabbagh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Iraq Wednesday signed the founding charter and administrative statute of the Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Industries Company and called for immediate implementation of the company's first projects which are two factories for processing tomatoes and pickling vegetables.

Initial plans for the company

The administrative and financial terms were signed by Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Rajai Muasher and visiting Iraqi Minister for Light Industries Tarek Hamed Alabdullah following two rounds of discussions on Monday and Tuesday. The two sides, according to Mr. Alabdullah, discussed the company's objectives, projects and operational conditions as were set by the governments of Iraq and Jordan. "We also discussed the company's government support and franchises in order to avoid future financial complications in distributing the company's dividends and interest," Mr. Alabdullah said in an interview with the Jordan Times on Wednesday.

The company's JD 20 million capital will be contributed equally by both sides and two million shares at the cost of JD 10 each will be sold to the public and private sectors, the minister said, adding that it will be a joint public shareholding company.

Earlier reports said that Jordan's participation in the company will be through in-kind donations or by providing raw materials, while the Iraq side would provide the JD 20 million. "This was the first visualisation of the company by both sides when Iraq and Jordan discussed the establishment of the company last January, February, but a lot of our future outlooks changed after several meetings between both sides," the minister added.

Initial plans for the company were concluded by former Minister of Trade and Industry Jawad Al Anani in a meeting held in Baghdad. But after the cabinet reshuffle last April, the company was shelved until Under Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry Mohammad Al Saqqaf visited Baghdad last October and was named as the director general of the company's board of directors.

In Wednesday's meetings, both sides decided that the company's first two projects will be a vegetable pickling company to be located in Iraq and which will use both Jordanian and Iraqi raw materials. According to Mr. Alabdullah, the pickled vegetables will be sold in both markets soon as Iraq has completed building the plant at Al Noumanieh. The second project for processing tomato juice and paste will be located in Amman and its products will be marketed in both countries.

The Iraqi minister, who arrived in Amman on Monday, ruled out press reports that the joint company was going to take over or buy the Al Arda tomato plant which is run by the Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company of Jordan (AMPCO).

He said that the Al Arda plant's capacity is insufficient to meet the Iraqi demand for tomato juice and paste which reaches 90,000 tonnes per annum. "Al Arda's annual production capacity is between five and six thousand tonnes and therefore such a venture is not feasible for the joint company whose aims are to benefit the needs of both Iraq and Jordan and later export to neighbouring Arab countries," Mr. Alabdullah added.

In a meeting of the company's board of directors held last Tuesday and which was attended by both ministers and chaired by Mr. Saqqaf, the under secretary said that the company's board will study and screen its future projects after all the related feasibility studies have been conducted, the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, reported.

JEA graduates new engineers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Wednesday graduated a new batch of trainees who completed courses at JEA's centres in Zarqa and Muqbalah. The graduates received theoretical and practical training in installing and maintaining electrical equipment, transformer stations and distribution networks.

The graduates received their diplomas from JEA Director

General Mohammad Sa'id Arafat who urged the graduates to put their knowledge to good use. The students, according to a JEA spokesman, received courses in languages and mathematics in addition to subjects related to their trade. The spokesman said that each trainee is given a JD 55 to JD 60 monthly in pocket money throughout the duration of the training course.

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No breakthrough in Jordan-PLO talks

(Continued from page 1)

members of the PLO to take part in initial talks with the U.S. and Israel as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to work out the mechanism for the proposed international conference.

The proposal, the official said, provides for a freeze in the U.S. demand that the PLO accept Resolutions 242 and 338 before the organisation is allowed to take part in the international conference. The PLO will be called upon to announce its acceptance of the resolutions at a later stage and it would clear the way for the organisation to attend the international conference, the official said.

Mr. Hassan, however, described the U.S. proposal he was referring to as "reflecting a positive change on the American position." He was commenting on the

U.S. willingness to accept the idea of convening an international conference.

Mr. Hassan said he viewed the new U.S. stand as "progress" but said the PLO would never give up its demand for Palestinian self-determination.

"Resolution 242 does not talk about a Palestinian national cause and does not recognise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination," he said. "Therefore, if we accept 242 as a basis for the suggested international conference we will be abandoning the Palestinian national cause and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination."

Mr. Hassan said the PLO position would not affect the organisation's relations with Jordan. "There are no differences between Jordan and the PLO," he said. "The differences are between the PLO and the U.S."

Talks and consultations will continue between Jordan and the PLO, he said but did not say whether the latest series of Amman meetings were over or whether talks were scheduled to resume on Thursday.

The PLO leadership will hold a meeting soon to discuss the latest developments, he said.

In other developments on Wednesday, Mr. Arafat received a message of support for the PLO and the Palestinian cause from the Soviet Union. The message was delivered to the PLO chairman by the Soviet ambassador to Jordan, Alexander Zinchuk.

Mr. Arafat also sent an urgent message to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, informed sources said. The message was sent to President Hussein through the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan.

U.S. official outlines new offer to PLO

(Continued from page 1)

for peace. Mr. Murphy, the U.S. administration's special Mideast envoy, said: "We made clear progress during this last set of talks in London and The Hague on convening an international conference and Palestinian representation at such a session."

"The exchanges among the parties reached a new level of detail and specifics on key issues in a way we had not seen until now," he said.

Mr. Murphy acknowledged that serious differences remained but said all parties were encouraged by the "incremental achievements," which he refused to detail.

Asked by the Chairman of the

House of Representatives Foreign Relations Subcommittee, Lee Hamilton, if Washington had made a commitment to Palestinian self-determination on the West Bank in exchange for Mr. Arafat's cooperation, Mr. Murphy said: "We have made no commitment beyond that laid down in the September 1982 speech by President Reagan supporting a Palestinian entity in association with Jordan."

Pressed to say if he had floated a proposal to that effect, Mr. Murphy declined to comment in public.

When asked by Representative Larry Smith whether the U.S. was creating the momentum in the peace process to try and get another extension for the deadline on the Congress decision to table

until March Jordan's arms request, Mr. Murphy said: "I didn't go back to the Middle East to artificially stoke up the fires... it is truly an incremental process."

In his phone interview with the Jordan Times on Wednesday, the State Department official said the administration was "not pushing too hard for Jordan's arms deal."

The official said the administration was very "pessimistic" about the Amman talks between the King and Mr. Arafat "but the situation completely changed on Monday." He did not say whether the administration had received something concrete that prompted the sudden change. "It could be something concrete and it could be wishful thinking," he said.

Jordan to market its attractions at world's largest tourism fair

By Rana Sabbagh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will take part in the world's largest forum for tourism communications and marketing by mounting an extensive display of the Kingdom's tourist attractions at the 20-year-old International Tourism Exchange (ITE) fair to open in West Berlin on Feb. 28. Tourism Authority sources said Monday.

The week-long event, which will be attended by 2,000 exhibitors from more than 100 countries and territories as well as 20,000 West German and international travel traders, will open at the International Congress Centre (ICC) fair ground in West Berlin.

Jordan will be represented by a Tourism Authority delegation and 14 other local professional tourism and travel agencies including Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline, office in Frankfurt.

"The fair is an important instrument for selling Jordan's attractions abroad, establishing tourism contacts and getting first-hand information about the latest international tourism trade techniques," said the director of a local travel agency who participated in the ITE on a previous occasion. "In view of the fact that the government is giving due attention to promoting domestic tourism and international tourism to Jordan, I believe this is an excellent opportunity for selling Jordan as a destination," the agency's director told the Jordan Times in an interview.

According to a public relations officer of the West Berlin company for exhibitions, fairs and congresses (AMK), which organises this fair along with two other yearly trade and agricultural exhibitions, the ITE is becoming an important venue for destination presentations by countries from the Third World.

AMK press spokesman Wolf Dietrich Gross told the Jordan Times that AMK's three-annual fairs have proven to be very effective in contributing towards the acceleration of economic development in the Third World countries as they get the chance to display their products and attractions to as many nations as possible.

Display stands

Jordan will stage several stands which will display tourism brochures, touristic sites, historical attractions, and slide shows. Alia's folklore troupe might also participate in the display.

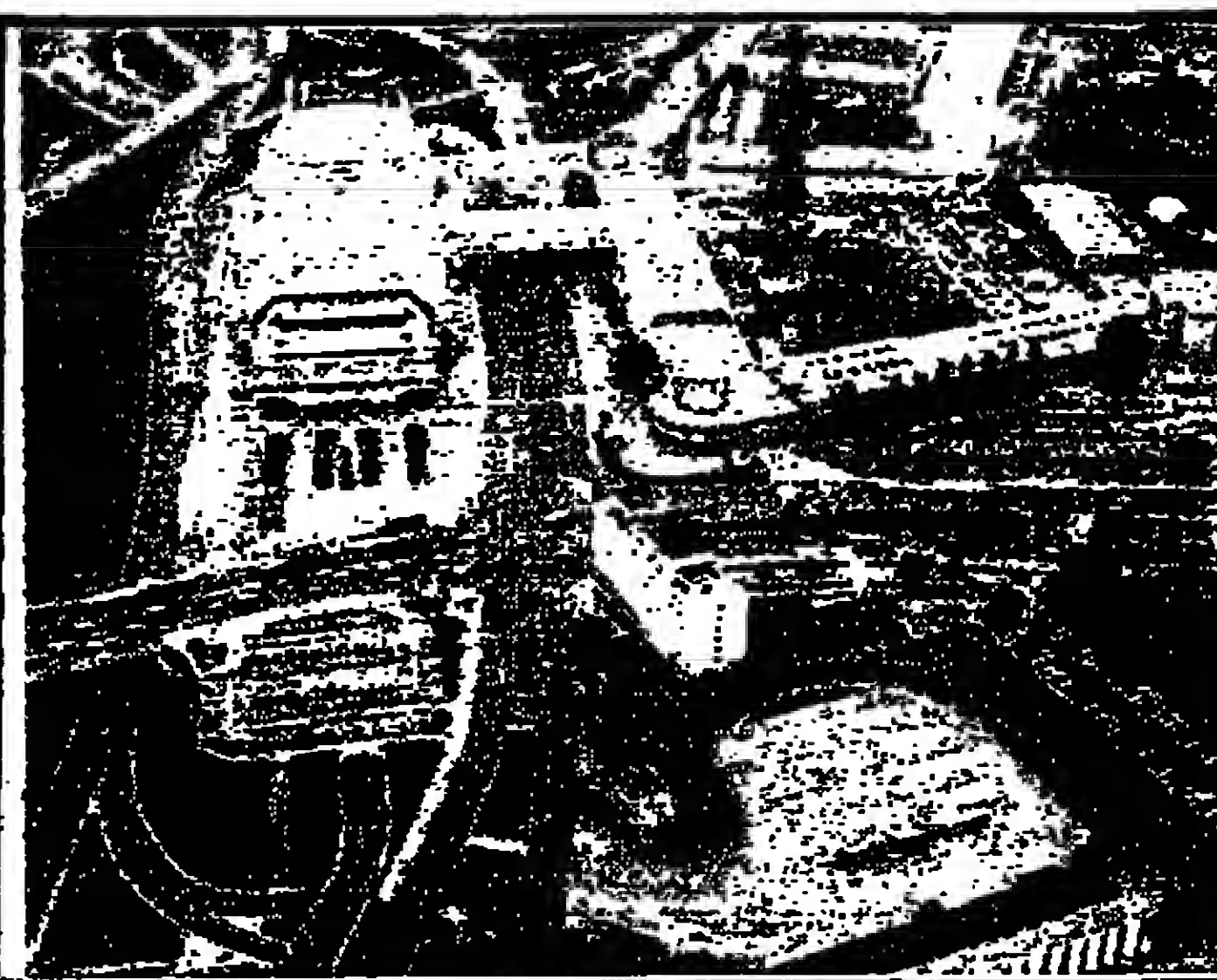
AMK officials also said that "many developing countries reg-

ard tourism as an economic factor with a great potential for reducing their balance of payments' problems by supplying foreign exchange needed to pay for their imports."

Press release issued by AMK said that over the past 20 years the international tourism throughout the world has expanded, become more international and has undergone some structural changes. The press release said that ITE participants will obtain information on what is being offered on the world tourism market and they will also be able to sign contracts and establish business contacts.

The event will focus on vocational, recreational and educational travel, on health vacations, coach travel and city tours, as well as international congress and business travel. The release added that all international business partners from foreign countries can meet representatives of their destination countries.

AMK will also launch another extensive support programme on the sidelines of the fair. A total of 500 conferences and workshops will allow professional traders to obtain additional ideas for their marketing work as well as providing them within the most up-to-date tourism data and statistics.



An aerial view of the international trade centre in West Berlin where Jordan will stage an exhibition of its tourist and archaeological attractions.

Folklore evenings in England

As part of a bid to promote tourism to Jordan, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, in cooperation with British Airways, will hold Jordanian folklore evenings in England, according to Tourism Authority Director General Nasri Atallah.

Mr. Atallah said the evenings will include folkloric dances and songs by Jordanian troupes and a

display of locally-made handicrafts to acquaint the audience with Jordanian heritage.

The evenings will include speeches by Mr. Atallah on Jordan and its archaeological sites and travel agents will be given first-hand information about the Kingdom. A documentary film will be shown and brochures and other literature on Jordan will be distributed.

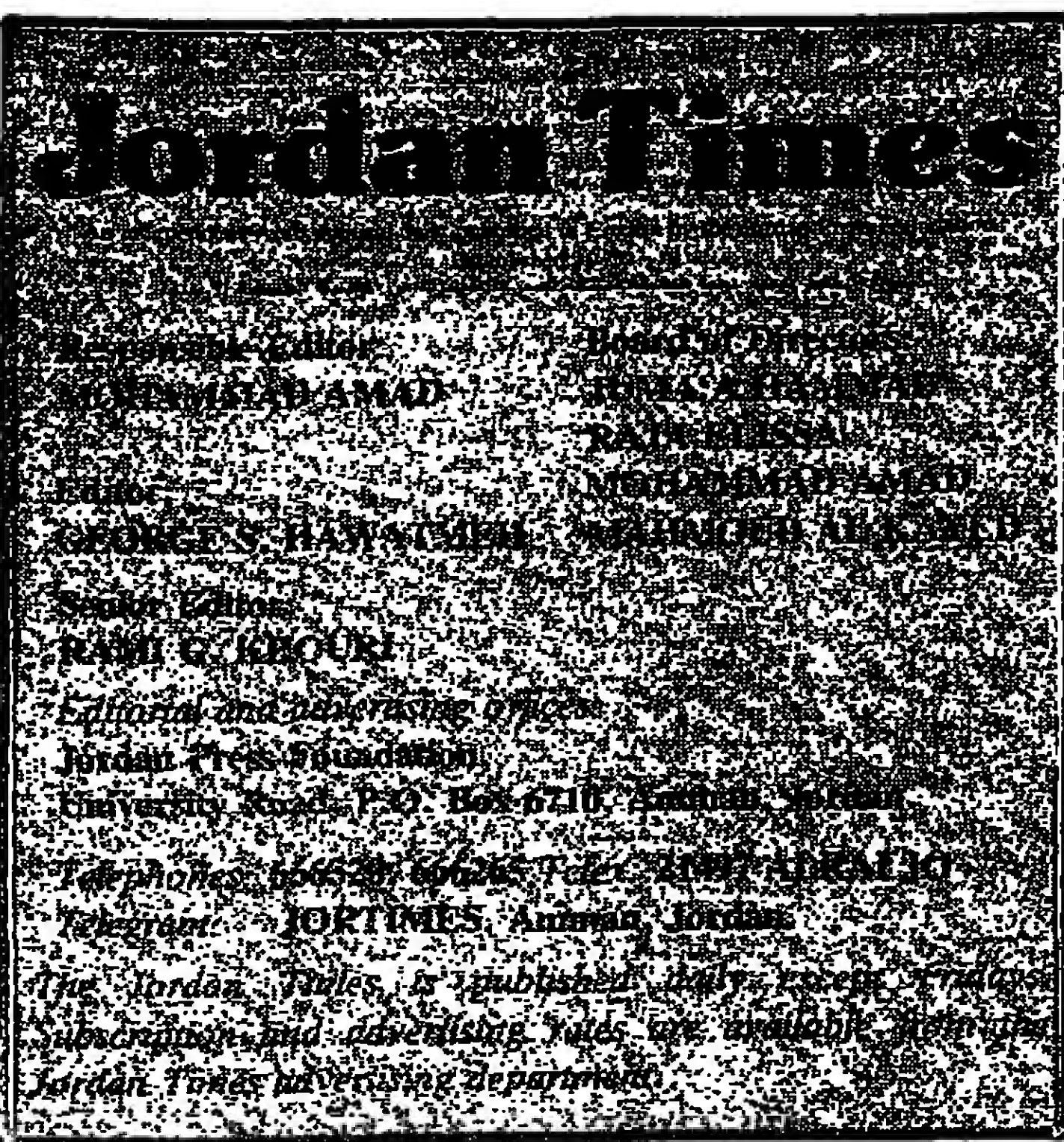
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AND THE FAR EAST



Call for Jerusalem

THE SERIOUS situation in Arab Jerusalem arising from repeated attempts by extremist Zionist elements and Israeli parliament members to storm Haram Al Sharif has regrettably been met with feeble counter-measures on the part of the Arab and Islamic worlds, despite their unanimous decision at the Jerusalem Committee meeting in Marakesh to take proper action to deal with the situation.

Leaders of these Arab and Islamic nations realise beyond any doubt Israel's intentions and far-reaching goals in Jerusalem and they have no doubt heard leaders of the Islamic and Christian faiths in Jordan and Palestine sounding the alarm and calling attention to Israel's practices which threaten the sanctity and future of holy places and the Arab inhabitants under Israeli rule. Sheikh Saadeddin Al Alami, chairman of the Higher Islamic Council in Jerusalem, said in a press interview published on Wednesday that Israel intends to demolish Haram Al Sharif, sooner or later, prior to rebuilding the Jewish temple; and is going ahead with other measures to Judaize Jerusalem and other parts of the occupied Arab lands. Coinciding with this statement, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat has announced that Israeli claims about rights in Haram Al Sharif are groundless as years of Israeli excavations under the holy shrine revealed no artefacts or antiquities to support such claims.

In support of their Muslim brothers, and in solidarity with the Arab population now resisting Israel's acts of repression, leaders of the Christian community in Jordan issued a declaration condemning Israel's actions and appealing to world organisations to put an end to such atrocities. The Christian leaders realise that their own holy places which witnessed similar acts of sacrilege in the past could not be safer or remain intact once the Israelis have had their way with the Islamic shrines. But, the Israelis seem to be undeterred by the Jerusalem Committee's condemnations and all calls of help to the Vatican and the United Nations. It seems that only practical measures and a strong action on the part of a unified Arab and Islamic nation can put an end to Israel's onslaught.

Before going to the Marakesh meeting, Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri said that Jordan would not be satisfied by statements of condemnations and will seek practical steps in this endeavour. Since the sanctity of the holy places in Jerusalem is of concern to all Arabs and Muslims alike, they all must come up with such practical steps, so that their concerted action can bear weight. Not only can they take up the affair with world nations and organisations but all Islamic countries ought to end economic and diplomatic ties with the Jewish state and contemplate similar steps against Israel's supporters. Furthermore, and in the absence of a unified plan to liberate Jerusalem from the yoke of occupation, the least that such nations can do is to supply Arab people under Israeli rule with moral and material aid and other essential means to maintain the momentum of resistance and continue to prevent the Israelis from achieving their goals.

If Islamic nations are genuinely concerned about their faith and their holy shrines, they should heed Jordan's urgent calls for help and join the campaign to save Jerusalem before it is too late.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Furthering industry

THE government has taken another bold step designed to provide further protection and encouragement for the local industries. It announced more exemptions from customs duty on primary goods that are used in industrial processes and increased customs duty on imported goods that can be manufactured in Jordan. The new step should be met with a positive response by the local industrialists who should seize the opportunity now and improve the quality of their products so as to win the confidence of the consumers. The treasury has offered a sacrifice by exempting primary goods from duty and this sacrifice should be responded to with constructive measures on the part of the local industries, so that the aspired goals can be achieved and Jordanian products be marketed locally and abroad.

Al Dustour: EC lesson

AS was expected, the European Community nations have refused to respond positively to the American pressures to impose economic sanctions on Libya. Washington had hoped that the Europeans will join in measures against Libya following the terrorist attacks on Rome and Vienna airports. The Europeans have adopted a more reasonable attitude towards the crisis quite different from the arrogant stand of the United States which resorts to the use of force and provocations against other nations to achieve its own purpose. Perhaps the European stand will bring the United States back to its senses and make it understand that military force can achieve nothing for any world power except for increasing world tension. We appreciate the European stand vis-a-vis the U.S.-Libyan confrontation and consider it as reflecting reason and wisdom on the part of European leaders. We hope that the United States will take a lesson and try to deal more reasonably with world nations under similar circumstances. The European stand was a sufficient lesson to make the United States more aware of the world situation and more flexible in dealing with areas of tension.

Sawt Al Shaab: Deep-rooted relationship

THE Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is deeply connected with the Palestine problem and the sufferings of the Palestinian people. This relationship makes it incumbent upon the Jordanian and Palestinian leaderships to pursue all efforts aimed at ending Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and liberating the Arab people of Palestine. The two leaderships, which continue their meetings in Amman, are aiming to reach a formula which can serve as a basis for the establishment of peace and the return of Arab rights. Both sides believe that peace based on justice should be restored to this region and that Israel's expansionist tendency should stop and the holy places safeguarded. On the other hand, the Israelis and the Americans are adamant in their position and do not want to give any recognition of the PLO and the rights of the Palestinian people and therefore the latest announcement by the American State Department about a progress that has been achieved towards a settlement must be groundless.

VIEW FROM AMERICA

U.S. uses Libya as its Mideast 'punching bag'

SAN FRANCISCO — Boxers use something called a "punching bag." They hit it to practice for a match in the ring. Or sometimes they just hit it to get rid of their nervous tension. And sometimes they hit it as a substitute for another person — it is safe to hit the bag and not the person.

Whatever defects or merits Col. Muammar Qadhafi may have, he has come to play the role of punching bag for the U.S. When something goes wrong in the Middle East, Washington starts to punch him. When terrorists attacked passengers in Rome and Vienna, Washington did not threaten to bomb Syria, Iran, the Palestinian camps in Tunis, or what's left of them in Lebanon. Instead it sent aircraft carriers into the Mediterranean, and threatened to strike at Libya.

Libya makes big noises but has not that much power and influence on its neighbours. It plays no role in Lebanon or in the Iran-Iraq war. Its meddling in the affairs of Chad has diminished. The new Sudanese government has improved relations with Libya but not because of Libyan pressure. Egypt dislikes Libya but is not threatened by Col. Qadhafi. And Libya is no threat to Israel.

In fact, it seems that every time Israel begins making some threatening noises against its neighbours, Washington decides to start hitting the Libyan punching bag. Is it Washington's way of getting rid of its nervous tension over what Israel might do?

Israel has of late been unhappy with the trend of events in the Middle East. It does not like the Jordan-Syria rap-

prochement. It is upset that Moscow, after showing signs of relenting on Jewish emigration, has again blown cold wind. It is upset about a cooling of U.S.-Israel relations because of the spying incidents. And, we can be sure, it is not happy with the new peace accords which have been signed in Damascus by the three contending parties in Lebanon. Israel is only happy when the Arabs bitterly fight amongst each other.

The last thing Washington now wishes is that Israel decide to strike out against some Arab nation. Washington is no longer so closely involved in Middle Eastern affairs. It has other, bigger worries: about the economy, about the U.S.-Soviet arms race, and also about the 1986 U.S. congressional elections. It wants quiet in the

Middle East. Perhaps punching at Libya is Washington's way of saying: if there is to be retaliation against terrorists, then let us do it against Libya. Beating up on Libya is not going to upset delicate relationships in other parts of the Arab world. Nobody really likes Col. Qadhafi, so everybody would be happy if he were bloodied.

As an observer of the Washington scene, I would say that the top concern of the Reagan administration is economic. It is determined to stimulate the American economy and the world economy as well. It assumes that inflation will not re-ignite. Washington wants no new Middle East war that could reverse the worldwide decline in the price of oil. The huge jump in oil prices during the 1970's was a major source

of inflation in the Western economies.

If Israel does not provoke some new hostilities and the decline in oil prices continues (but without a collapse), then Washington will be happy. It can then continue on its course of "benign neglect" of Middle Eastern issues (benign neglect was a term from the Nixon Administration applied to passive policy towards U.S. blacks). Terrorism is bad because it always has the danger of furnishing a pretext to Israel to carry out some massive retaliation like the Tunis raid.

It is interesting that West European nations are not rushing to join Washington in seeking to hit the Libyan punching bag. These nations have suffered from terrorism, but their leaders do not seem so naive as

to believe that the terrorists came directly out of some Libyan training camp. These nations want peace with the Arabs, but they also have close relations with Israel. Spain has now chosen to assume diplomatic relations with Israel. Israel is a political reality that cannot soon be changed. But the Arab World is an even bigger political reality for these nations. Punching at Libya makes no sense to them.

But the U.S. is different because of the intricate and dangerous relationship it has with Israel. And Israel is an intricate and unreliable country which at any time could do strange and disturbing things. By contrast, Libya is predictable and incapable of doing much that is intricate, dangerous, or disturbing.

Peace is the answer to terrorism in the Mideast

By Milton Viorst

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State George P. Shultz's anti-terrorism doctrine, which he calls "active prevention" and announced in 1984 after nine employees were killed in a truck bomb attack on the American Embassy in Beirut, is a failure. The reason is that neither threatened nor actual retaliation foil terrorists.

In announcing the doctrine, Mr. Shultz said America reserved the right to launch retaliatory and pre-emptive strikes, even without proof of who committed particular acts of terror, even at the cost of innocent lives.

Though America has not launched such strikes, it appears to have authorised Israel to do so in its behalf. The other day, Pentagon officials were quoted as saying "military intelligence support" had been offered to Israel for retaliation for Middle East terror. Moreover, America publicly encouraged Israel to retaliate for the killings at the Rome and Vienna airports.

If the aim of reprisal is revenge or gratification of blood lust, then perhaps "active prevention" works. But in recent months has reprisal saved American lives? Has it advanced the goals of American diplomacy in the Middle East? Has it diminished terrorism? No. Retaliation has killed far more innocents than terrorists have. Furthermore, since last summer each act of retaliation has raised the level of violence, costing more and more American dead, leaving the policy of peacemaking in the Middle East in shambles.

The current round began with the murder of three Israelis in Cyprus on Sept. 30. Although Cyprus convicted the killers, Israel unleashed a devastating raid on Palestine Liberation Organisation headquarters in Tunis, killing some 60 Palestinians and a dozen Tunisians. President Reagan called the raid a "legitimate response" to terrorism, apparently forgetting that Tunisia is a faithful friend, that it had long opposed Arab radicalism, that it had no involvement in Middle East wars, that he himself had endorsed the PLO's move to Tunis. Further, the PLO's official body, as against dissidents based outside Tunis, said it had nothing to do with the Cyprus murders, an assertion not disproved. Far from being intimidating, the

bombing incited terrorists to commit new outrages: seizure of the cruise ship Achille Lauro; then, the Egyptian hijacking of Malta, finally, the Vienna and Rome massacres. Now Washington apparently proposes to ratchet up the violence. The apparent target is Libya, whose President, Muammar Qadhafi, promises, if attacked, to start killing Americans on American streets. But not even Israelis claim retaliation stops terror. Israel's greatest success has consisted of sealing its borders, tightening airline and embassy security and infiltrating terrorist organisations. Israelis consider reprisal a political statement, not an anti-terrorism strategy.

It is a common perception in the Middle East that America sets a far higher priority on chastising a handful of killers than on making peace, all the while refusing to see a relationship between terrorism and peace.

Moderate Arab regimes, long courted by Washington, have been estranged by what they see as American complicity in the Tunisia raid. Egypt, our most valued Arab friend, was alienated over the Achille Lauro affair.

Our obsession with terrorism at the expense of concern for peacemaking has invited a resurgence of Soviet influence. In retreat since 1972, Syria, the Soviet Union's closest Middle East ally, has become the dominant force in Lebanon, and its influence is growing stronger every day. Soviet diplomats, for the first time, have the run of the Arabian Gulf and are welcome even in Saudi Arabia. The Sudan, once safely in America's orbit, is tipping toward Libya, a Soviet client.

Ironically, the chief beneficiaries of our policy are the Middle East "rejectionists," who practice terror precisely to thwart any Arab drift toward peace with Israel and friendship with America. Each time Washington endorses an escalation of violence, peace prospects take another step backward. Terrorists set the trap; we fall into it.

If Washington wants to defeat terrorism, it should press to get Arabs and Israelis to the negotiating table. "Active prevention" presents terrorists with a platform. Only peace holds a promise of taking it away — The New York Times.

Milton Viorst is a writer who specialises in Middle East affairs.



Catholic church comes under fire in India

By Brahma Chellaney

OLD GOA, India — Pope John Paul II will address the Indian clergy next month at a 16th century church whose possession is a matter of dispute between the Roman Catholic church and the local government in Goa, the "Rome of the East".

The basilica of Bom Jesus in the city of Old Goa is one of more than 10 magnificent churches that have been the focus of a dispute between the church and the government since Goa was seized by the Indian military in 1961, ending four centuries of Portuguese colonial rule.

Relations between the church and the Goan administration, headed by Chief Minister Pratapsingh Rane, have become strained by a renewed controversy over the ancient churches and the government's wariness of expanding church influence. The two sides recently were involved in what one newspaper called an "unholy controversy over selecting a holy site" for the papal mass in Panaji, Goa's capital.

The church itself has come under attack from its followers over the way it has been functioning, and there have been demands in the press that the clergy "renounce the pomp and glory of their office and serve the church in the true spirit of Christian humility and Christian charity."

The Roman Catholic church, headed by Archbishop Raul Gonsalves, is the most powerful institution after the government in

Goa, which attracts thousands of foreign tourists to its sunny beaches. About 35 per cent of Goa's 1.1 million citizens are Christians, nearly all of whom are Roman Catholics.

The government has viewed with suspicion the church's role in promoting protests calling for the adoption of the Konkani language as the "official language" of Goa. The protests have triggered counter-protests by the Marathi-speaking Hindu community.

Following fears that the protests may disrupt John Paul's visit to Goa Feb. 5-7, the church intervened this week and asked Konkani supporters to suspend their hunger strike, road blockades and other protests until after the papal tour.

The pro-Catholic Herald newspaper also appealed to Konkani supporters to suspend their protests until after John Paul's tour. "The battle for Konkani is very important. We cannot permit the momentum to be diluted. We have to fight... till our objective is achieved," the daily said in a front-page editorial.

Although the government's Literary Council has recognised the Hindi Devanagari as the official script of Konkani, church leaders — many of whom speak Portuguese — have supported the writing of Konkani in Roman script. There has been criticism of the church's failure to adopt the Indian cultural idiom 25 years after the end of colonial rule.

John Paul arrives in India Feb. 1 on his 29th overseas tour since

becoming Pope in 1978. The 10-day state visit, at the invitation of Indian President Zail Singh, includes meetings with Nobel laureate Mother Teresa and Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, head of the Anglican communion.

The grand old churches at Old Goa built in the renaissance style have been declared "protected monuments" by the government and have been taken over by the Archaeological Survey of India. All of them were built of locally available red laterite with basalt pilasters and columns.

"It is a very peculiar situation. While the Archaeological Survey of India is looking after these disputed churches, conducting repairs and giving them facelifts, we at the same time are holding services within them," said the Rev. Almir de Sousa, chairman of the Papal Tour Committee.

"They say they are in charge of the churches. We say they belong to us. De Sousa said in an interview. "They have done the landscaping, and when we have to celebrate mass on the grounds of a church, we have to seek their permission."

The churches include the

church of Bom Jesus, or infant Jesus; the Se Cathedral, with its Tuscan exterior and Corinthian columns at its portals; the Manueline-style church of Our Lady of the Rosary; the tower of the church of St. Augustine; and the church of St. Francis of Assisi, with its Portuguese national insignia and trefoil arch and double moldings suggestive of a sailor's rope.

Authorities say the disputed churches were confiscated from the church by the Portuguese colonial government and after the end of Portuguese rule they automatically became government property.

The church contends that although those properties were under the titular control of the Portuguese colonial government, they had been "handed over to the Goan archbishop who through the diocesan priests assured the continuous religious presence and service therein."

The Pontiff is scheduled to address Indian clergymen Feb. 6 at the basilica, where, richly gilded main altar has a figure of the infant Jesus and a large statue of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the order of Jesuits.

LETTERS

The victim victimised

To the Editor,

I cannot understand how the Philippine charge d'affaires in Amman, Mr. Contreras, had to wait until he read in the Jordan Times about the horrible murder of Jordanian student Salah Ayoub to give his condolences to the deceased's family.

Surely, Mr. Contreras should have done that privately when he received his "unofficial" report, as the representative of his country in Jordan.

Then he goes on to say that he had not received any "official" report from the Philippines on the circumstances of Salah's murder, therefore he could not give an opinion. Then he goes on to give an opinion from the "unofficial" report. All rather baffling, don't you think so?

Salah, a Jordanian citizen, has been horribly slaughtered on New Year's Day in the Philippines and all what Mr. Contreras could do is to try his best to ruin the victim's character basing his allegations on his "unofficial" report.

Salah, God rest his soul, cannot defend himself and his family cannot sue Mr. Contreras for defamation of Salah's character because we must presume that Mr. Contreras has diplomatic immunity.

To quote Mr. Contreras' information as was derived from the "unofficial" report he received, Salah was under the influence of alcohol, acting wildly, throwing money around and picking quarrels with "poor peace-loving Filipino youths" which led to violence.

This statement is a perfect example of turning the victim into the aggressor. I would like to know who the witness or witnesses were, if there were any, for this horrible murder. Or could this statement have been the statement given to the police by the murderous thugs to excuse a heinous bloody murder committed by them on a defenceless Jordanian youth?

Mr. Contreras certainly lacks diplomacy and tact and caused more grief to the Ayoub family by robbing their dead son of his good character and traits. And robbing the dead is the greatest moral sin of all. May Salah's soul rest in peace and may God give his family patience and consolation.

Mrs. Marya Usabi
P.O. Box 5166
Amman-Jordan

KGB officer disclosed spy network, French author says

By Gavin Bell

PARIS — A senior KGB officer in Moscow was the source of information which led to the arrest and expulsion of scores of Soviet spies from several Western countries in recent years, according to a French journalist.

Reporter Thierry Wolton, in a book published this month, says the officer passed 4,000 top-secret documents to the French counter-espionage service DST during 18 months from the spring of 1981 to the autumn of 1982.

The documents gave precise details of Soviet industrial spying throughout the world, including the names of all the KGB officers involved and those of agents recruited in 10 Western countries, Wolton says.

The expulsion of 47 Soviet diplomats from France in 1983 and the arrests of Western citizens in France, West Germany, the United States and South Africa between 1981 and 1984 all stemmed directly from this dossier, according to the author.

In his book, *The KGB in France*, Wolton says a number of suspects are still being investigated — including three members of the U.S. Congress and a member of the West German parliament whom he does not identify.

The author, citing "private sources," says the affair began early in 1981 when a letter reached DST headquarters from a high-ranking officer of the KGB intelligence service who had served at the Soviet embassy in Paris in the 1960s.

Without explaining his motives, he offered to "serve France." A first batch of documents received by the DST a few weeks later convinced the French of the importance of the information, and they assigned a senior agent to act as a courier.

The officer, code-named "Farwell," apparently had access to all dossiers relating to scientific and technological espionage coordinated by the Soviet military industry commission (VVK).

According to Wolton, the documents not only identified spies but also provided details of their operations and official estimates of the success of their clandestine missions.

The main targets were said to be companies involved in high technology research with military applications. In the United States, the Soviets and their agents concentrated on General Electric, Boeing, Lockheed, Rockwell International, McDonnell Douglas and Westinghouse Electric.

In France, they focused on Aerospatiale, Dassault, Saecma,

Matra, Thomson and Panhard.

According to VVK statistics provided by "Farwell," 61.5 per cent of technology acquired through "special channels" came from the United States, 10.5 per cent from West Germany, eight per cent from France, 7.5 per cent from Britain and three per cent from Japan.

Between 1979 and 1981, some 5,000 Soviet weapons were said by the VVK to have benefitted each year from Western technology.

They included an airborne early-warning radar system, the Blackjack bomber, the guidance system for SS-20 nuclear missiles, submarine torpedoes, air-launched missiles and research into "killer" satellites and laser weapons.

Soviet defence experts cited in the VVK reports estimated that "special information" acquired by spies between 1976 and 1980 was equivalent to the annual output of 100,000 researchers.

The "Farwell" dossier also disclosed that Soviet scientists had developed measures to counter the fire-guidance systems of the U.S. F-18 aircraft and Tow anti-tank missiles thanks to details of the systems provided by spies.

The U.S. was forced to modify the electronic guidance of its Cruise missiles for the same reason,

according to Wolton.

Western spies whose arrests between 1981 and 1984 were said to have been the result of the "Farwell" revelations included:

Pierre Burdail, an engineer with the French company Thomson-CSF Manfred Reisch, an engineer with Messerschmitt BB of West Germany, Dieter Gerhardt, a South African naval officer William Bell, an executive of the U.S. Hughes Aircraft Company James Harper, a U.S. engineer who passed secrets concerning ballistic missiles research.

The flow of secrets from Moscow stopped mysteriously towards the end of 1982, although Wolton says the KGB apparently never suspected the double-agent in their midst.

According to the author, there were persistent rumours in the Soviet capital at the time a high-level KGB officer had been involved in a sex scandal and had killed a policeman who was about to file a report on the case.

Wolton says the officer's identity and fate were not known, but the DST believed that he was "Farwell."

Excerpts of the book have been published by *Le Point*, an independent weekly news magazine for which Wolton works, but French officials have declined comment.

Below strength England team crushes Egypt 4-0

CAIRO (R) — England, without several key players, effortlessly thrashed Egypt 4-0 (halftime 2-0) in a soccer friendly here Wednesday winning a thunderous ovation from a 50,000-strong home crowd.

England, looking for clues about North African soccer before playing Morocco in the World Cup Finals in Mexico, played attractive one-touch football and left the Egyptians chasing shadows for much of the game.

A goal for England was already overdue by the 16th minute when Trevor Steven hit in a low drive on the rebound after goalkeeper Thabet Al Battal parried a ferocious shot by Mark Hateley of AC Milan.

A blunder by Egypt's Mohammad Omar increased Eng-

land's lead to 2-0 three minutes from the interval. Not realising Battal was near him on the edge of the box, Omar tried to backpass and hit the ball into an unintended goal.

Danny Wallace, playing his first full international, made it 3-0 10 minutes into the second half with a volley from deep inside the left-hand side of the box.

Hateley's fellow exile in Italy, Gordon Cowans of Bari, collected England's fourth goal in the 74th minute.

The Egyptians, warning up for

the African Nations' Cup finals here in March, were only a threat during a short burst of activity midway through the first half.

Mohammad Hazem headed twice from six yards into the safe hands of Peter Shilton. Another Egyptian striker, Tareq Yehia, tried Shilton again a minute later with a strong drive from inside the box.

But the veteran Southampton keeper had such an easy time for most of the rest of the game that manager Bobby Robson gave second-string goalie Chris Woods of Norwich City a 15-minute workout between the posts.

Ricky Hill, who came on in the second half, nearly made it 5-0 for England when he hit the woodwork in the dying minutes.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Soviet runner sets 3000 metre record

MOSCOW (R) — Olga Bondarenko of the Soviet Union set a women's 3,000 metres world indoor best time of eight minutes 42.3 seconds in Volgograd Tuesday, TASS News Agency reported. The previous best mark of 8:47.3 was achieved by American Mary Slaney in Los Angeles in 1982.

Bryan Robson confirmed for World Cup

CAIRO (R) — England soccer manager Bobby Robson said Tuesday he had no doubt that England captain Bryan Robson would be fit for his World Cup squad in Mexico next summer. Robson, addressing a news conference on the eve of a warm-up friendly against Egypt, said Robson was "over the worst." "He will make the English side for the World Cup without a doubt. He will be fit for the World Cup subject to nothing serious happening to him," Robson said. The England captain's much-heralded comeback to Manchester United on Saturday ended when he was sent off for arguing in an English F.A. fourth round tie at Sunderland. Robson has played only 12 minutes first team soccer since October because of injury.

United signs Terry Gibson

LONDON (R) — English first division soccer leaders Manchester United signed striker Terry Gibson from Coventry Tuesday in a transfer deal which saw Scottish international Alan Brazil joining the struggling Midlands club in part-exchange.

Cram may try for double at Commonwealth Games

LONDON (AP) — Steve Cram, Britain's double world record holder, said Tuesday he may run the 800 and 1,500 metres at next summer's Commonwealth Games, the first time he will have doubled up at a major athletics meet.

"If everything goes well and I don't get injured, then I want to do the 800 and 1,500 in Edinburgh and then defend the 1,500 metres at the European Championships in Stuttgart," Cram told reporters at a sponsorship reception in London.

But he said he may sacrifice the chance of an 800 metres gold medal to allow his clubmate, David Sharpe, a shot at the big time if it came to a straight choice between the two for the final place in the England team.

"I ran at the Edmonton Commonwealth Games when I was 17 and it proved invaluable. I have no doubt that David has the potential to go right to the top. He loves competing and loves racing," said Cram.

But he added: "I have always wanted to have a go at an 800 metres title and the Commonwealth is not so difficult as some others, particularly the way the programme works out. This is one of the few chances I would be able to go for 800 metres gold but I don't want to get involved in a selection fiasco."

Cram said his first major outdoor event would be the national cross-country championships in his home town of Newcastle in the north-east of England on March 1. Then he plans to travel to Colorado in the United States to tune up for the start of a busy summer season.

Poland takes aim at final four

By Michal Broniatowski
Reuter

WARSAW — Poland, one of the most successful international soccer teams of the last decade, fully expect to make the most of their seeding for this year's Mexico World Cup Finals and reach the last four again.

Coach Antoni Piechniczek said he was confident his squad was capable of beating any opposition in Mexico and planned "at least" to progress from the first round where they face England, Morocco and Portugal.

Furthermore, the team has received instructions from the national soccer federation to reach the last four.

Mexico will be Poland's fifth World Cup Finals, but first as a seeded team. Unsuccessful on their debut in 1938, they have performed with credit in the last three finals and twice finished third.

Standings from the last three World Cups show Poland on top with a total of 28 points from 20 matches played. Brazil are second with 27 points from 19 matches, followed by West Germany with 26 points from 20.

The squad are training hard to prepare for the heat and humidity they will encounter in Monterrey, where the average June temperature is 33 degrees centigrade.

If Poland reach the second round, they may have to move to play at high altitudes, but Piechniczek said the youth of his players, whose average age is only 26, would ease any acclimatization problems.

He has hired a high and secluded lakeside rest centre, about 30 minutes drive from Monterrey, where they will arrive twelve days before their June 2 kickoff against Morocco.

Training has already begun at a two-week winter camp and a squad of 20 left this week to spend 10 days in Italy playing third division clubs.

They will fly later to Argentina to compete in a tournament with leading Latin American clubs Boca Juniors and River Plate from February 5 to 8.

On February 16, Poland will play Uruguay in Montevideo, followed by internationals on March 26 against Spain in Gijon and on May 16 against Denmark in Copenhagen.

entagen. The latter will come at the end of their final two-week camp.

To help Piechniczek prepare for the Finals, the domestic season in Poland will end in early May, two months earlier than normal.

Piechniczek said the squad for the Latin American tour will not be joined by international veterans Zbigniew Boniek, Jozef Mlynarczyk and Wladyslaw Zmuda.

But Boniek, the Roma forward who is Poland's ace striker and who has stunned Italian fans with his surging runs, and goalkeeper Mlynarczyk, who now plays for Porto in Portugal, will certainly be on hand in June in Mexico.

Only centre-back Zmuda, now with Italian second division club Udinese, will have to fight for a place in Poland's defence and his fourth finals to beat the record of 21 World Cup appearances held by West Germany's Uwe Seeler.

Zmuda, 31, a towering sweeper, has played 20 World Cup matches, but Piechniczek said he is still in with a chance if he proved he was in his best form.

Piechniczek admitted he was in need of class centre-backs who, apart from defending, would be able to launch counterattacks. One of his top candidates, Jerzy Wijas, is not available because of

military service. Only five defenders are in the 20-man squad, but Piechniczek said he would test midfielders in the position.

The midfield is considered by the coach and even by his critics as Poland's strength. It enjoys the talents of Dariusz Dzekanowski, voted best player in 1985, and Jan Urban, a goal-hungry discovery of last year as well as two World Cup veterans Andrzej Bunol and Waldemar Matysik.

Boniek, a midfielder for Roma, plays as striker in the national team. The coach still looks for a class companion for the fleet-footed maestro and has selected six strikers, including veteran Wlodzislaw Smolarek, for his squad.

Soccer Federation Vice-Chairman Jerzy Domanski told a press conference that players going to Mexico were awarded bonuses of about \$700 each, to be paid in zlotys, the Polish currency. Reporters laughed in disbelief at such a small sum.

Piechniczek, for whom Mexico will be his second World Cup, said that although Poland lost its last three matches with Portugal it was more afraid of the confrontation with England which would come at the end of the first round series.

FIDE endorses Kasparov-Karpov postponement of chess title rematch

LUCERNE, Switzerland (AP) — The International Chess Federation agreed Wednesday to postpone the rematch between world champion Garry Kasparov and former title holder Anatoly Karpov from February until the summer.

The two Soviet grandmasters joined federation president Florencio Campomanes, in signing a document that stated that the rematch would start between July 28 and August 4 at a site to be announced later.

The agreement put an apparent end to a month-long controversy that rocked the federation. Kasparov had taken the crown Nov. 9 after two gruelling meets and a total of 72 games.

Karpov made use of his right under federation rules to request a rematch which was set by Campomanes to start in February in either Leningrad or London, the only two bidders.

Kasparov, who was opposed to playing Karpov again so soon after

winning the title, publicly attacked the rematch as "nonsense" and ignored several deadlines to state his acceptance.

Both grandmasters now have said they would like to play the newly scheduled rematch in Leningrad but Campomanes would like London and Leningrad to share the meet.

Kasparov, who has accused Campomanes of dictatorial methods, made clear at a brief press conference that the federation had only a secondary role in achieving the compromise.

Noting that he and Karpov had already agreed on the postponement in Moscow last week, Kasparov said he was "pleased that the International Chess Federation met our decision with understanding."

"I hope that in the future we will not have such issues," he added. Karpov said that "I share all words by Mr. Kasparov." Both spoke through an interpreter.

Later, Kasparov, who had done

most of the talking, told a reporter again that "The two players made their own decision, nobody can order us."

Campomanes said at the press conference that the postponement of the rematch required rescheduling the final of the next world championship that was originally to take place late this year.

But he said that a new date had not yet been fixed. He also said the federation's congress this year would decide on whether to return to staging the title meet every two years.

The two-year cycle introduced under Campomanes' presidency was essentially the cause of the rematch controversy.

Kasparov said he continued to be opposed to any return matches following a world championship. He said he agreed "in this particular case because it was in the interest of development of chess."

Karpov said the postponement of the rematch "involved only minor sacrifices for the chess world."

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CENTRAL TENDER No. 2/86

Construction of the compulsory schools/ The Sixth Education Project.

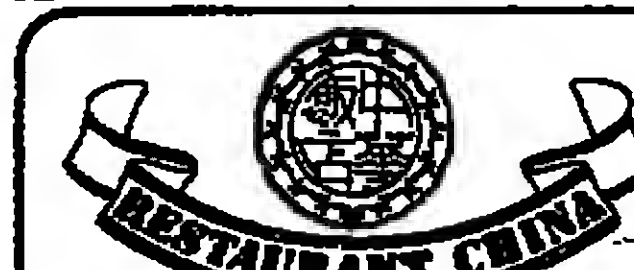
The contractors who had been qualified previously for the Sixth Education Project and willing to participate in the following bid are requested to get bid documents from the project directorate, Ministry of Education from 25/1/1986 with the following conditions:-

1. The Sixth Education Project is partially financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the compulsory schools were divided into ten groups and this tender buildings constitute the seventh group.
2. Description of the announced tender: No. 2/86 which include the construction of compulsory schools at the following sites: Hay Zawahreh, Jabal Abyad, South Square (Mafraq) with an area of 12000 m2.
3. Prices of the documents and tender bond as follow:

Tender No.	Price	Tender Bond
2/86	JD 250	JD 30,000

4. Last date for receiving copy of tender is 1/3/1986.
5. Last date of submission of offers is 12 O'clock 9/3/1986 at the Department of Government Tender Directorate.

Chairman of the Central Committee
Director of the Government
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TASS expands news coverage to West

LONDON (R) — The Soviet News Agency TASS signed an agreement Tuesday to sell its English language news service to a group of British companies, making it available for the first time through their computers.

The agreement, which was signed by the British company Datasolve at a reception at the Soviet embassy in London, TASS said it would give the world greater access to the news of the Soviet Union and would also be commercially profitable.

Under the agreement Datasolve, which is part of the Thomson Financial group, will make the TASS service available to users of its world-wide computerised news service.

From now on thousands of new subscribers will have access to TASS information, not through the edited summaries of newspapers and magazines, but directly and in full, through the database of a British firm, Mr. Yuri Romanov, deputy director general of TASS, said.

Asked whether TASS was seeking to correct what Moscow regards as distortions in Western reporting of the Soviet Union, Mr. Romanov said distortions happened because different people looked at things differently.

Soviet Ambassador Victor Popov said there was "a lot of misinformation" about the Soviet Union.

Both Mr. Popov and Mr. Romanov underlined one of the objectives of the deal when they referred to the importance of spreading major Soviet policy statements, such as Kremlin leader, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's Jan. 15 proposal to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

TASS has previously been available in the West in only a printer service, taken primarily by governments and the media.

The agency has some 1,000 subscribers outside the Soviet Union, but TASS officials said they expected to reach an additional 5,000 through Datasolve's world reporter.

Britain refuses to cooperate with OPEC

LONDON (R) — The British government will stick to its policy of not cooperating with the level of oil production in the level of world oil production despite heavy pressure from OPEC to curb output after the recent crash in world prices, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said Tuesday.

Replying to a parliamentary question on whether the government planned to discuss cooperation in managing oil prices with OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) and other producers, she said: "No, I do not think so. The U.K. maintains the freest oil province in the world subject only to technical limits."

"Decisions on production levels are entirely in the hands of the production companies," she added.

A sharp drop in the price of British North Sea crudes last week sent sterling plunging, despite comments from the treasury (finance ministry) that oil accounted for only six per cent of national income.

Britain's long-standing laissez-faire production policy has irritated OPEC as it tried to rally support from producers outside the cartel in order to stem the price slide.

Last week Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani forecast prices could fall to \$15 per barrel soon if such cooperation were not forthcoming, particularly from Britain.

Industry analysts say Britain, which produced 2.5 million barrels per day last month, is pumping almost flat out, despite a world glut.

Record \$4.6b investments pour into China

PEKING (AP) — More than \$4.6 billion has poured into China since it opened up to foreign investment in 1979, the government said Wednesday.

Approved number of joint ventures, 1,300, were entered into last year, the government also said.

Since 1979, 2,300 Chinese-foreign joint ventures have been secured, according to the ministry of foreign economic relations and trade.

So far, a third of the joint ventures have begun operating and more than 90 per cent of them are earning profits, Mr. Chu Baotai, deputy director of the ministry's foreign investment section, told a news conference.

He said four joint ventures have failed and less than 10 have serious management or foreign currency problems.

The ministry's chief spokesman, Mr. Huang Wenjun, said 1985 saw the largest influx of foreign capital since Mr. Deng Xiaoping's decision to open China's economy.

He said loan agreements totalled \$5.53 billion, up 84.4 per cent from 1984, and foreign investment contracts came to \$5.85 billion, up 120.7 per cent.

An additional \$360 million in leasing and compensation trade agreements was pledged by foreign partners, he said.

Officials said \$2.43 billion in loans, \$1.57 billion in direct investment and \$300 million for leasing or compensation trade were actually utilised in 1985.

Since 1979, China has secured loans from governments, international finance bodies and other sources totalling \$20.3 billion, half of it in commercial loans.

China has also signed contracts calling for direct foreign investment of more than \$16 billion from companies in 28 countries, the ministry said, adding the \$15.6 billion of the borrowed money and more than \$4.6 billion in foreign investment have been used so far.

Despite current government cuts in growth and imports, to cool an overheated economy, Mr. Chu said, "I expect in 1986 the progress won't be less than in 1985."

The investment share of most joint ventures is 60 per cent Chinese and 40 per cent foreign, he said. Eighty per cent of the investors are from Hong Kong and Macau, followed in predominance by the United States and Western Europe.

The state will continue to make priority allocations of raw materials and electricity for joint ventures, but there will be more emphasis on transportation, energy and manufacturing, and less on hotels and services, Mr. Chu said.

Major undertakings include an American Motors Corp. jeep plant in Peking, Volkswagen cars in Shanghai, Occidental Petroleum's Pingshuo coal mine in Shanxi province, and Pilkington glass in Shanghai.

The ministry also announced that in 1985 China signed labour or construction contracts for engineering projects overseas worth \$1.19 billion.

We apologise to our readers for the omission of the Daily Horoscope in the past few days. Probably, we may have to go without it some days more unless McNaught syndicate obliges us early.

Calls grow for OPEC output cuts to prevent oil price collapse

ABU DHABI (R) — A movement within OPEC to try to stave off a collapse in world oil prices by slicing output gathered pace Wednesday as Iran launched a drive for production cuts and Libya called for a return to group quotas.

Iran's drive to gather support for production cuts started with visits Wednesday by an Iranian envoy to the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Meanwhile, Libyan Oil Minister Fawzi Shalshouki was reported as saying OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) should revert to the group's former policy aimed at shoring up prices by restraining output.

Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Hossein Kazempour Ardebili, met UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan to discuss Iran's plans after he arrived from Saudi Arabia where he met King Fahd.

The drive from Iran, which earlier this week announced it would halve production in the face of falling prices, comes ahead of a special committee meeting of five OPEC oil ministers next Monday to determine what should be the 13-nation group's fair share of the market.

In an interview with the Kuwait News Agency, Shalshouki said OPEC should restore "previous resolutions relating to (production) quotas and official prices of their oil."

Most OPEC ministers agreed last month that the group should seek an undefined "fair share of the market," effectively abandoning a 16 million barrels per day (bpd) ceiling which had been in place for a year.

Since then OPEC output has risen to some 18.4 million bpd.

The minister, in a Libyan oil delegation touring the Gulf, said: "The hike in output does not at all make up for the decline in prices" and called for an output ceiling, which would fluctuate with changes in winter and summer demand and for oil.

Libya, Algeria and Iran have dissociated themselves from all formal OPEC decisions that have meant price cuts.

The head of the Libyan delegation, Al Khaweldi Al Hamidi, said after visiting Riyadh this week that Libya and Saudi Arabia had agreed to call for an emergency conference of OPEC oil ministers in an attempt to stop the collapse in oil prices. He gave no details of when or where it would be held.

Sterling regains ground

FRANKFURT (R) — The dollar began well below the psychologically important 2.40 mark level in quiet trading on European foreign exchange markets Tuesday, but sterling staged a strong recovery, dealers said.

Declining U.S. interest rates and a White House announcement late Monday night that the 1987 budget deficit will be "somewhat less" than originally estimated had pushed the dollar lower.

The pound regained strength after oil prices showed some gains in New York Monday, they added.

The dollar opened at 2.3936 marks, well below Monday's 2.4042 but above the 2.3910 finish in New York. It held in a narrow, one-pointing range as the morning's trading progressed, between 2.3865 and 2.3965 marks.

Dealers said the dollar would likely stay within a range of 2.38 and 2.44 marks, but its undertone remained soft.

Sterling recovered after U.S. crude oil prices rose by \$1 to more than \$20.50 a barrel overnight.

It also regained ground after Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had a majority of 160 to defeat an opposition motion on the Westland affair, lessening concern about the stability of the government.

W. Germany posts \$30b trade surplus

WIESBADEN, West Germany (R) — West Germany turned in its strongest ever trade performance last year as the export surplus surged to a record 73.3 billion marks (\$30.5 billion).

The Federal Statistics Office said Tuesday the current account, which measures trade in services as well as goods, also hit a record of 38.6 billion marks (\$16 billion).

Economists said West Germany's export spree was fed for much of the year by the stubborn strength of the dollar against the mark, while growth of imports was relatively subdued.

The current account surplus more than doubled from 1984's 17.8 billion marks (\$7.4 billion) and outstripped the previous record set in 1974 at 26.6 billion marks (\$11 billion).

Economists said West Germany's huge surplus of exports over imports would continue in the near-term, but the recent strong recovery of the mark should in the longer term lead to a correction, as exports became more expensive abroad.

Meanwhile, West Germany's central bank chief has issued one of the most optimistic forecasts yet on the country's economic outlook, predicting real expansion of 3.5 per cent or more this year, government sources said Tuesday.

Bundesbank (Central Bank) President Karl Otto Poehl made his forecast during a meeting of ministers and senior officials responsible for the economy, at which the government's official economic report for 1986 was approved.

But the sources said Mr. Poehl's prediction was not included in the report, due to be published on Thursday.

Bonn has instead opted for a more cautious estimate of three per cent growth this year, up from 1.7 per cent in 1985.

The forecast is in line with a prediction by its council of economic advisers but below those of some banks and banking associations who see expansion of up to four per cent.

The sources said Mr. Poehl, who with Economics Minister Martin Bangemann described the outlook for 1986 and beyond as "extraordinarily positive," based his optimism partly on the benefits of falling oil prices.

By considerably cutting costs, the oil slide would tighten the government's grip on inflation and boost the spending power of businesses and consumers alike, he was quoted as saying.

Stimulated by tax cuts, growth in private consumption is expected to speed up to 3.5 per cent this year from 1.5 per cent in 1985, according to the report, prepared before the recent heavy tumble in oil prices to six-year lows.

Together with continued strong investment by industry, the increase in private consumption will pull the focus of overall expansion away from exports, the main driving force behind the recovery so far, and towards domestic demand.

Earlier, Britain's key Brent grade briefly recovered to \$20 a barrel on the European spot market for the first time since early last week on a wave of speculative buying.

But Mrs. Thatcher's comments sent Brent back down to around \$19.75, almost \$10 adrift of levels early last month.

"Although there was nothing new in the statement, there was little support for the market and this was enough to drive even that out," one U.S.-based broker said.

Reagan names new agriculture secretary

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Ronald Reagan on Wednesday named Richard E. Lyng, once the number two official in the Agriculture Department, to succeed John Block as head of the agency.

Mr. Lyng, introducing Mr. Lyng at a White House ceremony, said American farmers "are going to have a sound and solid friend in Dick Lyng."

Boeing signs contract for plant in S. Arabia

BAHRAIN (R) — The U.S. Boeing Company has signed an agreement with Gulf companies to set up an aircraft overhauling plant in Saudi Arabia, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said Tuesday.

Boeing will team up with Saudi Arabian Airlines and two investing companies to put more than 480 million riyals (\$132 million) into the project, the agency said.

The plant is part of an "offset programme," under which Boeing and other U.S. winners of a large Saudi contract to set up an early warning defence system are required to reinvest some of the funds in high-technology industry in the kingdom.

In preliminary plans, Boeing had proposed a plant for the total maintenance of fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, with an estimated cost of \$230 million to \$270 million, industry sources said.

One source said plans, still not finalised, now call for an "aircraft modification centre" which may go beyond maintenance in structurally changing planes or helicopters.

The two other firms in the project are Saudi Arabia's National Industrialisation Company and the Kuwait-based Gulf Investment Corporation, owned by six Gulf nations including Saudi Arabia, SPA said.

It did not say how much each was investing or when the plant would be built.

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Tokyo cuts interest rate to assist hard-hit traders

TOKYO (R) — The Bank of Japan cut its key interest rate Wednesday to live up domestic demand and help Japanese businessmen who now find it harder to sell abroad.

From Thursday the bank will charge 4.5 per cent instead of five per cent on loans to commercial banks and other commercial institutions. This in turn should make it cheaper for businessmen to borrow from the banks.

Bank Governor Satoshi Sumita told a press conference he thought the time was ripe for such a move "to promote a balanced growth of the economy led by domestic demand."

The cut came as the yen soared to its highest level against the dollar in seven years, boosted by the combined efforts of governments in Japan and four major Western countries.

Making life harder for Japanese exporters was a main aim behind the drive to push up the yen. All five governments feared that, unless the deluge of Japanese exports was curbed, protectionist anger would explode in the United States and elsewhere.

As the yen climbed — it closed in Tokyo Wednesday at 194.30 to the dollar — Japanese manufacturers began to feel the pinch and started putting pressure on the government to ease interest rates.

Initial reaction from business leaders to the cut was enthusiastic.

Economist Keiichi Nagamatsu at the powerful Federation of Economic Organisations (Keidanren) expressed hope that it could help growth at a difficult time.

"But it is doubtful if the reduction alone will stimulate industrial output as future level of demand elsewhere is the key to increased corporate plant and equipment investment," Mr. Nagamatsu told Reuters.

The Mitsu Bank's chief economist, Mr. Hiroshi Kato, said the cut would raise Japan's real Gross National Product (GNP) by a meagre 0.1 per cent and cut back the trade surplus, expected to reach \$58 billion in the year to March 31, by only \$200 million.

Another economist, Mr. Michio Takahashi of the Nippon Credit Bank, said the effect would be smaller than expected because private firms were less dependent than before on bank loans.

An interest rate cut might normally be expected to weaken the yen but economists thought this was unlikely now because of pressure for lower interest rates in the United States and elsewhere.

This belief seemed to be confirmed by the behaviour of the dollar which continued to subside after the impending rate cut was widely known.

Mr. Sumita told reporters the cut was not aimed at supporting the value of the dollar. But he did not anticipate any sharp dollar plunge.

After four months of continuous international pressure, the dollar broke through the 200 yen barrier only last Friday.

Economists said Japan would not like to see the dollar fall below 190 yen but some believed this could happen.

U.S. trade chief calls for further drop in dollar's value

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. trade representative, Mr. Clayton Yeutter, said Tuesday a further 10 to 15 per cent drop in the exchange value of the dollar was needed for substantial reductions to be made in the American trade deficit.

Mr. Yeutter, who added in remarks to U.S. and Israeli trade officials that he would like to see an even bigger drop, said that even if exchange rates remained at present levels there would be an improvement in the U.S. trade deficit by July.

Ugandan rebel leader sworn in as president

NAIROBI (R) — Guerrilla leader Yoweri Museveni was sworn in Wednesday as Uganda's new president, Radio Uganda reported.

It said Mr. Museveni took the oath as president and then began his first formal speech.

Mr. Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) guerrillas seized the Ugandan capital, Kampala, from the military administration of Gen. Tito Okello on Sunday and announced they were the new government.

The swearing in represents a new step towards a consolidation of power by the NRA, which controls most of southern Uganda but

has so far not moved into the north of the country.

The guerrillas took control of the eastern garrison town of Jinja on Monday and were Tuesday advancing towards Tororo, about 160 kilometres to the north east.

Jinja, Uganda's second largest city, was a key objective as it is the site of the Owen Falls Dam which generates all the country's hydroelectricity.

Government troops fled north after Jinja fell, looting shops and harassing civilians.

Lutheran missionaries in the north western town of Pakwach reported large-scale looting by supporters of former Dictator Idi Amin who came from the region.

The missionaries said they would leave for Kampala Wednesday as the well-disciplined NRA were unlikely to reach the area soon.

Mr. Museveni said on Monday he expected the NRA to take control of the north within a few weeks. He acknowledged his movement had made little impression in the north, but said he expected little resistance because his troops always treated local people with respect.

Bonn, Washington deny part in Indian spy case

NEW DELHI (R) — West Germany and the United States Wednesday vigorously denied that their diplomats were involved in an Indian spy case which has forced two ministers to resign.

A spokesman for the West German embassy said allegations against two diplomats named in a police document on the spying activities of businessman Rama Swaroop were completely unfounded.

Nine American diplomats were also named in the report, which said Swaroop, arrested last October on espionage charges, passed political and defence secrets to "subvert the political system and affect friendly relations with foreign powers."

A spokesman for the U.S. embassy said in a statement: "The U.S. government denies that any U.S. government officials have engaged in espionage activities with Swaroop and specifically that any U.S. government official has sought or received classified information or documents from Swaroop."

The West German diplomats named were Plus Fischer, a former first secretary who left Delhi three years ago, and Rolf Breitenstein, a press counsellor who left last summer, the West German spokesman told Reuters.

He said both men left at the end of their normal term in India. The only connection they had with Swaroop was in organising functions of the Indo-German Parliamentary Group, he said.

Colombo extends curfew in central Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — A curfew was extended Wednesday in nine tea-growing areas of central Sri Lanka but the government said the situation was under control after ethnic clashes and a plantation strike.

Cabinet Spokesman Anandadasa de Alwis told reporters ethnic unrest in the central province was discussed at the cabinet's weekly meeting but the situation was not serious.

He said the curfew was being extended till 7 a.m. local time Tuesday as a precautionary measure.

Security forces went on alert in the capital Colombo as opposition

groups held meetings Wednesday to oppose government plans to give citizenship to 94,000 stateless people, mostly Tamil tea workers of Indian origin.

About 30,000 plantation workers went on strike Tuesday and security forces shot dead one looter and wounded another at Talawakelle after two days of clashes between Sinhalese and Tamils, who live side by side in tea-growing areas of central province.

Police and army units were rushed in as mobs stoned cars and trains after fighting erupted over a clash between a Sinhalese shopkeeper and Tamil worker.

Opposition plans protests, strikes against Ershad

DHAKA (R) — An alliance of three Bangladeshi opposition groups said Wednesday they planned demonstrations in Dhaka Thursday to drum up support for a national strike intended to put pressure on the military government.

The movement, which has a large following among fundamentalist Muslims, said the six-hour strike next Monday would start a new phase of their opposition to President Mohammad Ershad.

The opposition has pledged to step up its campaign to thwart Gen. Ershad's plans to hold elections in April under martial law.

Led by Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Begum Khaleda Zia and the Jamat E Islami Party, the alliance has also given support to a proposed industrial strike on Sunday.

The parties said in statements Wednesday: "Our long struggle to restore democracy and free the country from clutches of the military will prove futile if we agree to his plans."

Begum Khaleda Zia, who heads a seven-party grouping, has accused Gen. Ershad of trying to perpetuate his rule "under the guise of a civilian head of state." "We won't let his dream come true," she said.

Gorbachev extends olive branch to Italian Communists

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has extended an olive branch to the Italian Communist Party, at odds with the Soviet party since the 1970s, saying that differences of opinion were natural and even valuable.

He was speaking at a Kremlin dinner Tuesday night in honour of visiting Italian Communist Party leader Alessandro Natta, with whom he has had two rounds of talks.

Mr. Gorbachev said that differences between the two parties remained in evaluating "various problems, events and facts."

"This is natural and makes fraternal dialogue between the Soviet and Italian Communist Parties, between Communist Parties in general, all the more valuable and necessary," he said.

He added, however, that left-wing forces should not "cultivate" their differences but take them into account when working together for such goals as disarmament.

The Italian Communists, at the forefront of the so-called "Eurocommunist" movement, have stressed their independence from Moscow and criticised Soviet policies in Afghanistan and Poland. Mr. Natta's visit is the first by an Italian Communist leader since 1978.

He has received red carpet treatment in Moscow. Diplomats said it was rare for a Western politician, even a Communist, to see the Soviet leader on two consecutive days and to be honoured with such a dinner speech.

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Kuwait endorses 2-year 'motherhood' leave

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's National Assembly has endorsed a bill allowing married Kuwaiti women in the public sector a two-year "motherhood" leave on half-pay in addition to two-month maternity leave on full salary. The bill, passed despite government objections, stipulates "motherhood" leave can be taken only three times in the course of public service. There is no limit on the number of maternity leaves. An estimated 9,600 Kuwaiti women stand to benefit out of a total of nearly 160,000 civil servants. Over half the public sector workers are expatriates. Ministers argued that the extra benefit would severely tax ministry resources, hitting hardest the education, health and social affairs ministries.

Bank robber gets it in the neck

SYDNEY (R) — A would-be robber who leant across a counter at a west Sydney bank demanding money activated a security screen which rose up, lifting him off his feet and trapping his head, police said Wednesday. The 23-year-old man, who was treated in hospital for a neck injury, was later charged with attempted robbery.

Taiwan Buddhists hope to save tigers

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's Buddhist leaders said Wednesday they had launched a fund-raising campaign to buy 12 Bengal tigers to save them from the dinner table. An Agricultural and Fishery Department official said the tigers had been imported from India and Bangladesh as "pets." But a Taiwan Buddhist Association spokesman said eight already had been sold to village butchers in south Taiwan who planned to kill them during the Chinese Lunar New Year next month. He said the tigers saved would be donated to zoos. Tigers meat is a popular winter dish in Taiwan. Many people believe it keeps them warm and virile.

Deng in excellent health

PEKING (R) — Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who has not been seen in public since mid-December, is in excellent health, Communist Party Chief Hu Yaobang said Wednesday. The official New China News Agency quoted Mr. Hu as telling a Japanese delegation that Mr. Deng, 81, made a speech on Jan. 17 to a meeting of the standing committee of the ruling politburo on combating "unhealthy tendencies." He did not say where Mr. Deng was or whether the politburo had met in Peking.

Treasure hoard raised from sunken ship

AMSTERDAM (R) — A British salvage expert has unveiled a huge treasure hoard of gold and Chinese porcelain worth more than \$4 million raised last year from a wreck in the South China Sea. Michael Hatcher, 45, announced his discovery in the Amsterdam auction house which will sell it for him in April, and then took reporters to a warehouse stacked ceiling-high with the haul. It includes nearly 100,000 pieces of 18th century Chinese porcelain in perfect condition, and 125 little gold bars which alone are worth \$700,000. They were all aboard a Dutch East India Company ship which sank in about 1750 with a cargo from Nanking especially made for the fashionable dinner-tables of Europe. Packed in tea — also meant for sale — the blue-and-white porcelain survived the wreck and two centuries underwater to emerge as bright and shiny as the day it was made.

Marcos reportedly using dirty tricks to win next week's presidential polls

MANILA (R) — Opposition leaders accused backers of President Ferdinand Marcos Wednesday of opening a bag of dirty tricks, plots and intrigues to win next week's election by fraud.

Presidential contender Corason Aquino said Mr. Marcos may pull out on the morning of polling day and substitute his politically powerful wife Imelda because his health had worsened. She would collect all ballots in his name.

Her aides said at least one Manila radio station was broadcasting advertisements for the Marcos camp using a woman whose voice sounded like Mrs. Aquino. She said she could not bear the heavy burden of the presidency and that a woman's place was at home.

They also accused the gov-

ernment's Supervisory Commission on Elections (Comelec) of ordering school teachers who will man polling booths on Feb. 7 to declare invalid all ballots in favour of "Cory" and "Doy" — her nickname and that of her running mate Salvador Laurel.

The last-minute substitution of a presidential candidate is permissible under the Philippine election code. It also says the use of nicknames do not annul a vote.

Mrs. Aquino said in a statement: "It is most likely that Mrs. Marcos will file her candidacy at around 11.30 on the very day of the election to replace her ailing husband. There are indicators that this will happen."

The government has denied

persistent reports that Mr. Marcos, 68, who has appeared at campaign rallies with one hand heavily bandaged, is in poor health. He limped at a rally in southern Mindanao Tuesday and again Wednesday.

Imelda Marcos, 56, a former beauty queen, is governor of Metro Manila and minister of human settlements. She is widely regarded as the political driving force behind her husband but has repeatedly denied nursing presidential ambitions.

Mrs. Aquino aides said Comelec was also denying them a hearing on plans to hold a vote count by computer which they fear could be pre-programmed to deliver a Marcos victory.

Shuttle disaster draws words of sympathy, support

NEW YORK (R) — The disaster of the U.S. space shuttle Challenger drew expressions of sadness and support from around the world, often with words of encouragement that America must show resolve with its space programme.

Despite the explosion, which left President Reagan in "stunned silence," the White House indicated Tuesday the shuttle programme would continue, whatever the delays.

"What can you say? ... It's a horrible thing," Reagan told reporters. "I just can't get out of my mind the families..."

Mr. Reagan, who cancelled his state of the union address set for Tuesday night because of the disaster in which seven astronauts died, was meeting top aides at the White House when Challenger blew up 72 seconds after blasting off from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The president watched tapes of the explosion on television and described the experience as "very traumatic."

"He is deeply shocked and concerned at what he has just seen. He watched it in almost stunned silence," White House Spokesman Larry Speakes said of Mr. Reagan.

Mr. Speakes, asked about the future of the shuttle programme, quoted Mr. Reagan as saying: "These people were dedicated to the exploration of space. We could do no more to honour these courageous people than to go ahead."

The disaster of Challenger, which was on 25th shuttle mission, had no more occurred when messages of condolences began arriving in the United States from around the world.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Queen Elizabeth sent messages of sympathy to Mr. Reagan.

"The wonderful story of the space shuttle and its many spectacular successes had left us full

of admiration," the Queen said. "It is tragic that this success has taken its price in brave young lives. Our sympathy goes especially to their relatives, but also to you and all Americans."

The Soviet deputy representative to the United Nations, Vasily Safonchuk, expressed "deep sorrow" and extended sympathy to the families of the crew.

Safonchuk said at a news conference in New York: "I use this opportunity to express my mission's deep sorrow and to convey to all those concerned, and particularly to the families of the members of the crew, our deepest sympathy."

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney expressed shock and sadness but said the accident "ought not discourage us from participating in this great adventure."

In Bonn, a government spokesman said West Germany had sent a message to the U.S. administration expressing its sympathy and described the disaster as a "tragic accident."

West German Astronaut Ernst Messerschmid, who flew a space shuttle mission last October, said he was shocked. "I knew nearly all the members of the crew."

French President Francois Mitterrand sent a telegram of condolence to President Reagan.

"It has always been the destiny of courageous peoples, discoverers of new worlds, to pay a heavy price in this way for progress," he said. "But we know that nothing discourages humanity in its march forward."

French Astronaut Patrick Baudry, who flew aboard the space shuttle Discovery last June and knew members of the Challenger crew, said he was sure the U.S. space agency had taken every possible precaution.

I believe that the sacrifice of my friends who were aboard today will certainly not be in vain," he

said. The European Space Agency, commercial rival of the shuttle programme, said: "It is a sad event for space as a whole."

South African President P.W. Botha said in a message: "All South Africans were stunned ... the free world has followed the United States' space programme with pride."

Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi said the disaster was one that hit the United States in that peaceful activity of space research which for years the entire world, first of all Italy, has followed with admiring interest and enthusiasm.

In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone said he had sent a cable of condolences to President Reagan.

One of the three Japanese astronauts chosen for a flight aboard Challenger in January 1983 told reporters: "I still want to see the earth from space." Mamoru Mohri, 38 Tuesday, said: "There are always unpredictable things for technical progress."

In a message to President Reagan, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke said: "I am sure all Australians join me in extending through you to the American people and especially to the families of the Challenger crew our deep sympathy and understanding."

Television images of Challenger exploding in the Florida sky brought gasps of horror and disbelief from a stunned nation.

Nurses in a New York City Hospital ward rushed into a hallway, grabbed a stranger's arm and pointed wordlessly to a ball of flame on the television screen.

In Chicago, trading all but stopped on busy commodity exchanges.

In Concord, New Hampshire, the students of America's first teacher to ride into space cheered and then cried as the winged shuttle disintegrated in a ball of fire.

In Pasadena, California, space agency officials cancelled a news conference at which scientists planned to wrap up Voyager 2's initial findings about the planet Uranus.

Word of the worst tragedy ever for the nation's space programme spread quickly.

On an underground train beneath Manhattan, a young man shook his head sadly. "I just can't believe it," he said. "I thought these flights were getting to be as routine as a regular plane ride."

Midday lunch crowds in Chicago stared silently at television screens airing reports of the accident.

Bars in the city's financial district, where attention is usually riveted on video screens carrying the latest market quotations, found patrons staring in disbelief at replays of the disaster.

Trading at both the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange all but stopped. "People just don't feel like trading," said one stunned trader.

On the launchpad at Cape Canaveral, Florida, parents of Christa McAuliffe watched Challenger disappear downrange, then a space agency official told them the craft had exploded.

The parents, Edward and Grace

Corrigan, stared wordlessly as television cameras recorded their first inkling of tragedy.

Groans rose from nearly 300 friends and relatives of McAuliffe who had gathered at the spaceport for the launch.

The explosion stunned and shocked the U.S. Congress Tuesday. The House of Representatives, after observing a moment of silent prayer, adjourned for two hours and the Senate, which was not meeting, scheduled a prayer session in the afternoon.

"I guess we always knew there would be a day like this," said Sen. John Glenn, the former astronaut who was the first American to orbit the earth.

Sen. Glenn, a veteran military pilot, said when he saw replays of the explosion on television, it appeared to him that one of the two strap-on solid-fuel tanks on either side of the main engine "had a blowout of the case at the cockpit or the crew area of the shuttle."

Sen. Glenn stressed that he was only speculating and had no way of actually knowing what caused the explosion.

Christa McAuliffe had life insurance worth \$1 million on the Lloyds market, a Lloyds of London spokesman said Tuesday.

Lloyds of London, which has insured space satellites in the past, said the shuttle was insured by the American space agency NASA and initial indications were that none of the satellite equipment on board was insured by Lloyds.

The explosion was the worst disaster since manned space exploration began in 1961.

The worst previous space-related tragedies were the deaths of three U.S. astronauts in 1967 and three Soviet cosmonauts in 1971.

In the 1967 accident, astronauts Virgil Grisson, Edward White and Roger Chaffee were burned to death during a rehearsal takeoff leading up to the first Apollo mission.

In July 1971, three Soviet cosmonauts died during re-entry when their space ship suddenly lost pressure.

From the moment that Soviet Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space early on April 12, 1961, space flights were free of tragedy for six years.

The first person to die in space was Vladimir Mikhalovich Komarov, a Soviet astronaut, who was killed in April 1967. A parachute that was supposed to slow the descent of his spaceship failed upon re-entry and the vehicle hurtled to the ground.

Apollo's test flight in 1967 was meant to bring man closer to his dream of walking on the moon. Instead, three American astronauts suffocated in their spacecraft before takeoff when it suddenly caught fire on the launch pad.

In the Soviet tragedy, three Soyuz cosmonauts died because of a sudden loss of pressure in their space capsule. The men were given a hero's funeral in Red Square and their ashes were placed in the Kremlin Wall.

In Moscow Soviet state television showed the U.S. space shuttle Challenger's launch, explosion and fall in its main bulletin.

THE WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Edited by Herb Ertzma

CARTOON TRIVIA

By William Canine

ACROSS

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